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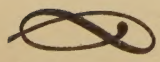
The Convention Series

I. J. VAN NESS, D.D., General Editor

Studies in Ephesians and Colossians

E. Y. MULLINS, D.D., LL.D.

Edgar Young Mullins



Ephesia
Colossia

Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention
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PREFACE TO THE SERIES.

This series of Commentaries has been projected to cover the whole of the New and Old Testaments. In the selection of writers, an effort has been made to select qualified men, who are, at the same time, representative of the reverent and Bible-loving spirit of our people. Consequently, large liberty has been allowed the various writers, though at times it may be deemed necessary to indicate that other views prevail.

The most critical examination is invited, though a widespread usefulness is coveted.

J. J. Van Ness.

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PREFATORY NOTE TO EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS.

The object in view in the publication of the set of commentaries to which this volume belongs imposes certain limitations upon the author in the treatment of the text. The aim of the commentaries of the series is to serve the Sunday school teacher, the pastor, and Christian worker generally. In accordance with this purpose the author was instructed to avoid introducing Greek words, and as far as possible to omit technical matters dealing with the grammatical structure of sentences, and matters of textual criticism, It will be found, therefore, that the commentary is almost entirely destitute of these things. The effort has been to explain the meaning of the text in a connected way, and as directly and simply as possible. Ephesians and Colossians, being the very crown of Paul's doctrinal teaching, and being written in a style far more involved than the other epistles, the reader should be prepared for some difficult passages. I do not think, however, that any reader who pursues the exposition with a moderate degree of patience and perseverance will have any difficulty in understanding, although he may not always agree with, the interpretations. It is impossible to give credit to all writers who have helped the author. Many years ago I made a thorough study of Colossians, and a study, though less thorough, of Ephesians. Of course all the ground has been gone over again with care in the case of both epistles. In the introductions to the two epistles the salient facts as to dates and authorship have been presented. The text on which the commentary is based is that of the American Standard Revision.

E. Y. M.

Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians.

There are several matters which need to be considered briefly before we come to the actual work of explaining the text of the Ephesian epistle.

AUTHORSHIP.

The first relates to the authorship of the epistle. Who wrote it? The epistle opens as follows: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God," etc. Not only does Paul's name appear in the opening sentence. Everywhere in the epistle the writer represents himself in terms suitable to Paul. He is a Jew. To him was especially committed the mission to the Gentiles. There are many other details which may easily be found by a careful reading of the epistle. The epistle has been ascribed to the apostle Paul almost without exception by Christian writers until modern times. We note first the early witnesses. There are various references to Ephesians in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, that is, men who lived in the age of the Apostles. Clement of Rome quotes Eph. iv: 4-6 in substance if not in exact words. Ignatius speaks of the Ephesians as sharing with Paul the mystery of the gospel (Eph. i:9; iii:4-9; ii:19). Polycarp reproduces Ephesians iv: 26, 27. The Didache, the writing known as the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* seems to quote Ephesians vi: 9, 5. It reproduces the essential meaning of the passage in Ephesians. The sect of the Valentinians quoted Ephesians iii: 4-18.

From the above it is clear that the epistle existed at the end of the first century. Passing to later dates we find that the epistle is recognized in what is known as the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170). Irenaeus, who lived about A.D. 130 to A.D. 200, attributed the epistle expressly to the apostle Paul. It is quoted by Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-210) and by Tertullian (A.D. 160-240). It is found in all the ancient versions.

In addition to the claim of the epistle itself and the early traditions there are many evidences within the epistle, indicating that Paul wrote it. One of these is the ability and grasp of the writer in deal-

ing with great Christian themes. Another is the harmony between the teachings of Ephesians and Paul's other writings. The cross of Christ is less prominent here than in Romans and Galatians. But it is vital to the argument here as there (Eph. i:7;ii:13;v:2). Again throughout the epistle God acts upon the world through his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Key to the explanation of history (Ch. i:1-14; iii:21). There are many coincidences of thought and language between Ephesians and Colossians. Thus the proofs of the Pauline authorship of the one apply to this extent to the other. The style of Ephesians has many points in common with Paul's style elsewhere, although of course there are differences. For example, the broken and interrupted sentences, his tendency to "go off at a word," the rush and flow of his thought and language, his variety of forms of expression to set forth fully his main idea, and so on.

We consider next a few objections to the Pauline authorship of Ephesians. One of these is the style. It has been described as "verbose," or wordy, a sort of weak reproduction and expansion of Colossians, a falling off from Paul's high level of thought and language. This is the criticism of DeWette. But other equally capable judges have expressed a very different view. Chrysostom, Erasmus, Grotius and others estimate it very highly in both respects. Coleridge says "it is one of the divinest compositions of man." The epistle has many marks of the highest literary value. One is its unity of thought. Another its progress toward a definite conclusion. Another is its breadth and sweep. It is really a self-consistent philosophy of history. Another is its clearness. There are, it is true, some obscure and difficult expressions, a number of long and involved sentences. Yet even in these it is the fullness and richness of thought which the writer is attempting to express, rather than obscurity of thought or language, which occasion the difficulty. The epistle is certainly not a mere expansion of Colossians, since its aim and argument are different. In Colossians the thought is unfolded from the point of view of Christ as the head of the Church and of creation. In Ephesians the point of view is the unity of believers in Jesus Christ

(*Foot Note*—The reader is referred to the article on Ephesians in Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible for extended list of parallel passages in Ephesians and Colossians.)

and the reconciling office of Christ throughout the universe. There are of course important points of contact between Colossians and Ephesians but they do not cover the same ground.

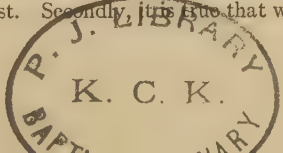
Another objection is that certain teachings found elsewhere in Paul's writings are absent here. One of these is the doctrine of the cross. But the doctrine of the cross is vital to the whole argument. This appears in the first chapter, and in ii:14-16 we have it again strongly stated. The whole argument of the epistle rests upon Paul's doctrine of the cross. The cross and its meaning are assu ed throughout.

It is also objected that Paul's doctrine of "last things," the second coming of Christ and related topics, are wanting here. So they are, but this in no way discredits it as a Pauline writing. The second coming doctrine was ordinarily used for practical ends by Paul when he sought to stir up Christian zeal to resist persecution and the like. Here the range of vision is very much wider. Christ in his universal relations is the theme. The second-coming idea was not essential to the argument.

It is also argued from Ephesians iii:5 where there is a reference to "holy apostles and prophets" that the epistle must have been written much later than Paul's time, after the tendency toward ecclesiasticism had set in, when "holy" was applied with a meaning unknown in the New Testament. But it has been well said that in the same chapter three verses farther on the writer removes all suspicion that he is trying to put apostles and prophets on a pedestal of unwarranted ecclesiastical authority. In iii:8 he says "unto me who am the least of all saints is this grace given." This is scarcely in keeping with the alleged tendency

It is also claimed that there are certain new and strange ideas found here, outside the range of Paul's thought. Especially is attention called to the teaching as to the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ. Along with this there is absence of emphasis upon individual salvation and much stress upon corporate salvation, the entire body of Christ being under consideration.

In reply it must be said first that these ideas are not entirely new. In the eleventh chapter of Romans under the figure of the olive tree Paul sets forth substantially the teaching as to the unity of Jew and Gentile in Jesus Christ. Secondly, just as that we have advanced



views here in certain respects. Nowhere else do we have such elaborate and exhaustive statements as to the unity which Christ secures. The entire epistle is a good commentary and in a way the expression of the meaning of Christ's prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John. Again it should be noted that Paul's earlier teaching as to justification by faith lays the foundation for all we find in Ephesians. Faith is the universal principle and condition, and Jesus Christ is the universal object of faith. The reconciliation of all parts of the universe in Christ becomes thus the logical outcome of Paul's earlier doctrine of justification. Objectors who question the Pauline authorship because they do not find exact identity of ideas with earlier writings really assume that each epistle must, when written by the same author, merely reproduce its predecessor. Of course there will be advance of thought or else the later writings would be unnecessary.

Another objection is based on the fact that there are in Ephesians eighteen words found nowhere else in the New Testament except in Paul's writings and forty-two words found nowhere else in the New Testament, "words spoken once for all." This however is not a real objection. There are one hundred such words in Romans; one hundred and eight in First and ninety-eight in Second Corinthians; thirty-three in Galatians, and forty-one in Philippians. Such words are not difficult to account for. A number of those in Ephesians are found in the description of the Christian's armor in the last chapter. Any new and striking figure of speech or analogy calls for many new terms. Any new development of thought also necessitates new words to set it forth. The fresher and more original the writer, therefore, the greater number of new words in each new production of his pen. Another point may be noted here. It is quite generally admitted that the writer of Ephesians, whether Paul or some one else, wrote under Paul's name. Unusual words therefore are an argument not against but in favor of the Pauline authorship. A writer claiming to be Paul would seek to imitate and reproduce the thoughts and words of Paul. Hence all new thoughts and words are, so far, indications that Paul, and not another, is the author.

The Readers.

To whom was the epistle written? This is a much-debated question. There is not space here to discuss fully all the points on which opinions have differed. I give simply a general outline of the argument.

It has been doubted that the epistle was addressed to the Ephesians chiefly because in two of the most ancient of New Testament manuscripts the phrase in verse 10 "in Ephesus" is wanting. The two ancient manuscripts which lie, as it were, at the basis of all later manuscripts of the New Testament, are the Sinaitic and the Vatican. Neither of these has the words "in Ephesus." Another ancient manuscript known as 67^2 also lacks the phrase. The reading in this manuscript however, may possibly be due to the influence of one of the other two.

There is yet other evidence that the words "in Ephesus" were not in the original manuscript. Basil (A.D. 329-379) says in one of his writings: "this reading (that is, the reading which omits the words 'in Ephesus') was handed down by those who have gone before us, and we ourselves have found it in the ancient manuscripts" (Eunomius Book ii: c. 19). Origen also (A.D. 186-254) called attention to the absence of the words "in Ephesus." It is true that all ancient versions of the New Testament and other ancient manuscripts insert the words. Bishop Lightfoot one of the sanest of textual critics has declared that any reading in the epistles of Paul supported by the three manuscripts above referred to almost always represents the original text.

Now, it is true that if we omit the words "in Ephesus" there remains a somewhat difficult form of address. One translator makes it read "to the saints existing and faithful in Christ Jesus." Others, especially among earlier commentators, such as Basil and Origen, sought to find a mystic meaning in the phrase "to the saints who are," that is, "to the saints who share in the divine life of him who said of himself 'I am.'" But there is a simple and tenable translation of the words: "to the saints who are also faithful."

Marcion, one of the early heretics, declared that the epistle was originally addressed to the Laodiceans. But this may be accounted for on the supposition that he saw a copy of the epistle with the words

"to the Laodiceans" inserted. But this was not necessarily the original epistle.

The most tenable view is that Paul wrote the epistle not to the church at Ephesus alone but to a group of churches in Asia Minor which included that at Ephesus. There were churches at Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossae and elsewhere in the surrounding country. If the epistle was addressed to all these without particular designation of any kind all the facts will be accounted for. In Colossians iv:16 Paul refers to "the Epistle from Laodicea." This might easily refer to our Ephesian epistle which the Colossians were to receive in due course as it passed on from church to church. This would account also for the absence of the words "in Ephesus" in the earliest manuscripts. The epistle might have been copied later and the names of particular churches inserted. Marcion may have seen one such addressed to the Laodiceans. This view accounts, especially for the general tone of the epistle. Paul's epistles usually abound in personal references, greetings and salutations. (Compare Colossians, Romans, Galatians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Philippians, etc.) Yet in Ephesians there is almost a total absence of such references. This seems incredible if the epistle were addressed to the Ephesian church originally. The relations between Paul and that church were most tender as we know from his long sojourn in Ephesus and his meeting with the Ephesian elders, as recorded in the Book of Acts. The church at Ephesus may well have been included in the group of churches addressed, but it could scarcely have been the only church to which Paul was writing. The view which prevailed in the later history, as shown in versions and later manuscripts, that the epistle was addressed to Ephesus, might easily have arisen from the fact that Ephesus was the metropolis of the entire region, and as the years passed and some of the smaller churches disappeared the epistle might naturally have been connected with Ephesus alone. We conclude therefore, with a great number of leading scholars, that the epistle was written by Paul most probably to a group of churches which included that at Ephesus in their number.

Time and Place of Writing.

The strongest arguments support the view that Paul wrote this epistle from Rome, during his captivity there somewhere about the year 63 A.D. It is also probable that he wrote the epistle to the Colossians and that to Philemon about the same time and sent them by the same messenger. Philippians was probably written somewhat earlier during the same captivity. There are indications of close connection in time between the three epistles we have named. The Ephesian and Colossian epistles are much alike in their general tone. In each Paul is dealing with Christian doctrines in their universal meaning. They shed light on each other in that each in its own way completes the thought of the other. The emphasis in Ephesians is upon the church as the body of Christ; in Colossians it falls upon Christ who is the head of the church which is his body. But apart from indications of this kind there are particular references in the three epistles which point to the conclusion that they were written and sent at the same time and by the same messenger. In Ephesians iii:1 and iv:1 Paul refers to himself as a prisoner and in vi:21 he says; "But that ye may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things." And in Colossians iv:7 he writes "All my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you" and in verse 9 he adds "together with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother." In the epistle to Philemon who was the owner of the runaway slave Onesimus, Paul writes in verse 13 "whom I would fain have kept with me." His reference is to Onesimus whom he is sending back to his master. The indications are therefore that Tychicus and Onesimus journeyed together, Onesimus returning to his master at Paul's instance and Tychicus bearing Paul's epistles to the Colossian Church where certain errors needed correction, and our epistle to the Ephesians which was written originally to a group of churches in Asia Minor.

Some have supposed that the imprisonment of Paul, referred to a number of times in these epistles, was that which took place at Cæsarea rather than the later imprisonment at Rome. This view is not supported by any conclusive evidence. It is not necessary to reproduce it here. In brief it may be said that nearly if not all the points urged in favor of the imprisonment at Cæsarea apply with

equal if not greater force to the imprisonment at Rome. Besides these there are strong considerations which favor the view that he refers to the Roman imprisonment. The "imperialism" if we may so express it, of the epistles, the wide outlook, the universality of Christ's relations to men, the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ, the summing up of all things in him, are indications which suggest Rome as the place of composition. What more natural than that the quick mind of the great Apostle to the Gentiles should seize upon the analogy of Christ's eternal kingdom with the Roman Empire and set forth this great truth in the universal terms of Ephesians and Colossians?

General Description and Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Every well-written sentence contains one leading idea to which the parts are subordinate. The words and clauses each add something to the completeness of the one leading thought. So also every well-written paragraph has in it one main thought to which every separate sentence is subordinate. Each sentence adds something to the completeness of the one main thought of the paragraph as a whole. The same law of unity holds as to every chapter and as to every well-written book as a whole, although we must always keep in mind that in the Bible the divisions into chapters were not made by the biblical writers, but in a more or less artificial manner by others.

Two things are needed to bring out the meaning of a book of the Bible. One is explanation of the meaning of words; the other unfolding of the general course of the thought. Many commentaries are dreary reading because they are merely scrappy and scattered remarks about the meaning of words and clauses. The reader is jolted along, as it were, over a corduroy road in a vehicle without springs. Yet word studies are necessary as part of the commentator's work. The earnest reader desires to know the meaning of words, since these are the stones out of which the temple of thought is built. There should be added, however, such general outline of the writer's course of thought as will gather up the meaning of particular words into a higher unity.

The epistle to the Ephesians is marked by unusual unity of thought as well as literary structure. It is a complete and very comprehensive statement of the Christian religion in its widest meaning. Its fundamental thought is the unity of mankind and indeed of the created universe in Jesus Christ the Savior and Redeemer.

The method of treatment in this commentary will be to deal with the epistle by sections or paragraphs, developing the thought gradually. As a rule it will be necessary to treat various words of the paragraph in order to understand its meaning as a whole. Summaries of teaching will also be necessary from time to time. Links of connection between the parts will be pointed out. The aim will be to assist the reader of the epistle to an appreciative grasp of Paul's great ideas as recorded in these two crowning epistles of the captivity; in short, to impress his frame of mind upon the mind of the reader.

Outline of the Epistle.

God's Eternal Purpose of Redemption through Christ. Eph. i:3-14.

It is not easy to sum up briefly the leading thought in verses 3 to 14. In this paragraph Paul states the meaning of the gospel in its largest outlines. He traces the salvation of the individual and of the church back to an eternal purpose of God (verses 4 and 5). Then he pursues the course of the redemption through Christ to its final outcome in the perfection of believers and the glorification of God through them. Between these two boundaries in the eternity of the past and that of the future he gathers up the rich variety and fullness of salvation in its many details. The Trinity comes into view as Paul successively points out our adoption and sonship to God the Father, (verses 5 and 6) our redemption through the blood of Christ the son (verses 7 and 8), and the seal and earnest of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon us (verses 13 and 14). The apostle not only declares the relations of the redemption in Christ to the eternal purpose of God but also to the successive periods of human history. The gospel age is the climax of the previous ages and its meaning is the key to history. (verses 10 and 11). The passage before us is not a formal argument but rather a calm exposition of the ultimate meaning of redemption. It is thus an answer to the inquiry of any believer whose mind seeks to grasp the meaning of the marvelous experience Christ

has brought to him. The passage is freighted from beginning to end with great and luminous thoughts. The power of language is strained to express what is in the mind of the writer. And yet burdened as this passage is with thought it is set forth as a thanksgiving, welling up from the great heart of the apostle to the Gentiles to the God who has so marvelously disclosed the hidden secret of the eternities for the redemption of men. There are three stages in the course of Paul's thanksgiving, each of which ends with the expression "to the praise of his glory" or its equivalent. The first of these includes verses 3 to 6, the second verses 7 to 12, and the third verses 13 and 14. The first refers to the work of God the Father, the second to the redemption that is through Christ the Son, and the third to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Unity of All Things in Christ. 1:15 to 3:21.

This introductory paragraph in Ephesians is like the prologue of the Gospel of John. It contains all that follows in its general outline. The remainder of the epistle is an exposition of the meaning of verses 3 to 14. The central thought of this paragraph and of the epistle is the unity of all things in Christ. In verse 10 the end and object of God is "to sum up all things in Christ," things in heaven and upon earth. The particulars with which the apostle deals in this vast summing up are the following: 1. The exaltation of Christ to universal sovereignty (i:15-23). 2. The quickening of the Gentiles from their life of moral and spiritual death (ii:1-10). 3. Unity of Jews and Gentiles in Jesus Christ as equals in the household of God (ii:11-22). 4. Paul's apostleship as the chosen means of God for declaring and making real this predestined unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ (iii:1-9). 5. The ultimate outcome in the exhibition through the church thus unified to principalities and powers, of the manifold wisdom of God. (iii:10-13). Prayer for their spiritual strengthening and enlightenment (iii:14-21).

Practical Section. 4:1 to 6:24.

Chapter four begins the practical part of the epistle. In this also the fundamental thought of unity appears everywhere. 1. The basis of the unity in one body and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (iv:1-6). 2. The

gifts of pastors and evangelists, etc., are with a view to the unity and maturity of the church in Christ (iv:7-16). 3. There are exhortations to avoid certain sins, chiefly sins against unity, and to practice the corresponding virtues (iv:17; v:21). 4. Exhortations to unity of family life in all its phases (v:22; vi:9). 5. A description of the Christian armor necessary for the saints if they are to make a successful stand together against the hosts of evil (vi:10-20). Closing words and benediction (vi:21-24).

I have spoken of the strain of thanksgiving running through verses 3 to 14. There is another devotional element in this epistle very remarkable. The apostle in the course of his exposition pauses twice to utter a prayer for wisdom and understanding on the part of his readers. The first of these is in chapter i, verses 15 to 23, the second is in chapter iii, verses 14 to 19. The writer is conscious of the vastness and wonder of the plan of God which he is expounding and knows that his readers will need divine illumination in order to grasp its meaning. There are no prayers elsewhere in Paul's writings which surpass these two in depth and intensity, in spiritual breadth and elevation. Any form of Christianity which minimizes the understanding is not Paul's Christianity. And any form of it which is mere intellect without spiritual life and light is equally remote from Paul's gospel. Surely if Paul's readers needed divine illumination in order to grasp his meaning, so do we who are to interpret and understand his epistles.

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS.

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints that are [1]at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1]Some very ancient authorities omit, at Ephesus.

Salutation 1:1-2.

Paul varies the form of salutation in his epistles. In Galatians he emphasizes his direct relation to Christ: "Paul an apostle not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ," etc. In Romans he describes himself as a "bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God," etc. In every case there was fitness in the form of statement. His apostolic authority was questioned by false teachers among the Galatians. Hence the accent he gave to Christ's appointment of him to his apostolic office. In our epistle he is writing to a group of churches a general letter. His reference to himself is also general: "Paul an apostle . . . . through the will of God."

The "saints" whom he addresses are those who are separated unto God and partakers of his holy nature. The modern sense of the term according to which a "saint" is a holy or perfect man as contrasted with a less holy person is not in the word as employed here. The "faithful" in Christ Jesus simply gives a further description of the saints. Sainthood in the New Testament arises through faith in Jesus Christ. The adjective faithful like the noun faith comes from the common root of the verb meaning to believe, (*pisteuoo*). The words "in Ephesus" do not belong to the words of this salutation. Ephesus was no doubt one of the churches to which the epistle was written. As we have seen in the introduction, the epistle was probably addressed not to the church at Ephesus alone, but to a group of churches in Asia Minor.

"Grace to you and peace" is a form of greeting very common, indeed almost universal, in Paul's epistles. It is in a very peculiar sense a Christian form of greeting. Grace is the central fact of the

3 Blessed *be* [1]the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places*

[1]Or, God and the Father. See Rom. 15.6 margin.

gospel, the key to its meaning. The essential and primary meaning of the word grace is undeserved favor bestowed by a superior upon an inferior. In the gospel it is that active and energetic love of God which, in and through Christ, clothed itself in human form, and continues now to work for man's redemption. "Peace" is the result of the action of this grace of God in the human heart.

It will be observed that the Lord Jesus Christ is coupled with "God our Father" as the source of the grace and peace. As we shall see, Jesus Christ is the central bond of the universe, in Paul's thought, and at the outset of the epistle, according to his custom, Paul links Jesus Christ with God the Father as the source of spiritual life. The three designations "Lord Jesus Christ" bring out with force the apostles expanded thought of his Master. Jesus was his name as man; Christ, or the Christ, became his official designation as Messiah; and at length it also became a proper name. Jesus Christ became Lord to his disciples in increasing measure by a progressive manifestation of saving power and this reached its climax in his resurrection and ascension.

All Things Summed Up in Christ 1:3-14.

Some one has said we enter the Ephesian epistle by a magnificent archway. *Verse 3* begins "blessed be the God" and goes on to declare that all spiritual blessings in heavenly places are bestowed on us in Christ Jesus. "Every spiritual blessing" might be understood as meaning "every blessing bestowed by the Holy Spirit" or "every blessing which is spiritual in character." The latter meaning is probably the correct one, since it is the peculiarly spiritual wealth of Christians which is dealt with in the epistle. It is the nature of the blessings as spiritual rather than their source in the Holy Spirit which the apostle seeks to emphasize. The "heavenly places" is a phrase confined to this epistle, in which it occurs with slightly varied meanings five times, i:3; i:20; ii; 6; iii:10; vi:12. Here it does not refer to the heaven above us from which the blessings are, as it were, poured out. The salvation in Christ lifts us into the heavenly realm. We

in Christ: 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before [1]him in love: 5 having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus

[1]Or, him; having in love foreordained us.

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now sit with him in heavenly places (See ii: 6). The blessings bestowed are all those which belong to this spiritual realm of life and peace and joy.

The blessings are those which are "in Christ." As believers and abiding in Christ by a life union we receive what God bestows. Our relation to Christ thus places us within range of the gifts which flow to him. He is the ground and sphere of the life which comes to us.

The present fullness of blessing accords with God's eternal purpose. In *verse 4* he continues: "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world." As will become clearer in the course of our exposition, Paul is thinking everywhere in this epistle of the gospel of God's grace as a secret long hidden in the divine purpose, and now revealed. In the phrase "he chose us" the verb is in the middle voice meaning "he chose us for himself." Of course this implies a choice from among others. The emphasis of the statement, however, is on the end or result of the choice, viz.: "that we should be holy and without blemish before him." "Without blemish" as applied to an animal victim for sacrifice would mean without physical defect. As applied to a saint or "holy" one, a believer in Christ, it means without blame. This holy and blameless condition is to be "before him," i.e., in God's sight, and according to God's standard.

The expression "in love" at the end of *verse 4* may be read as a part of the statement which precedes it, or of that which follows. Both the Canterbury and American Revisions connect it with what goes before. We prefer to take it as a part of what follows: "in love, having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself." To add the words "in love" after "holy and without blemish" seems rather redundant, a needless addition. On the other hand, "in love" seems especially fitting as an explanation of the gracious choice which "foreordained us," etc. The "adoption" of this passage is a favorite word of Paul (See Rom. viii: 15). It comes from Roman law and custom. It was not in use among the the Jews. John employs another word, (*teknon*) meaning a begotten

Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of the glory of his grace, [1]which he freely bestowed on us

[1]Or, wherewith he endued us.

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one. Adoption was the taking of an alien child and adopting it into the family. A child in the sense of *teknon* was one who partook of the father's nature, having been "begotten" and not adopted. God adopts us "unto himself" through Christ "according to the good pleasure of his will." Paul multiplies expressions to indicate the sovereign pleasure of God. The choosing and foreordaining, however, do not so strongly suggest the absence of merit on the part of the chosen as does this phrase "the good pleasure of his will." It means that which seemed good to him. Paul, however, is not thinking so much of the others who are not included in the choice as he is of the marvelous and matchless love which prompted the choice, the gracious purpose of redemption which God alone could have conceived and executed. God is a free Being who chooses the ends and means and the conditions, and without being subject to the capricious choices of imperfect and finite free creatures, he carries out his own gracious purposes in and through Christ.

Verse 6 closes the first strophe of Paul's chant of thanksgiving "to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." We praise the grace which is declared and manifested in our redemption through Christ. This is the outcome: the glory of his grace comes to light, beams forth, in our salvation, and our praise is the response to it. The latter part of *verse 6* is exquisitely beautiful and difficult to translate. "He freely bestowed" is an inadequate translation of a Greek word (*echaritoosan*) which has the same root as the word grace in the same sentence. The word means not only to treat as an object of grace, but to pursue with grace, to compass with favor. Literally, if such a translation were possible, it would be "the grace with which he *graced* us in the Beloved." Of course the Beloved here is Jesus Christ. (Compare Matt. iii: 17 and John xvii:23, 25.) Throughout this epistle the gifts of grace are uniformly bestowed upon us in or through Jesus Christ.

There is no period in this unusually long passage of Paul's from the third to the fourteenth verses. The paragraph is a single sentence. And yet the divisions of his thought are very clearly marked. *Verses*

in the Beloved: 7 in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

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3 to 6 deal with God's eternal choice of us to sonship through Jesus Christ. Christ appears in these verses as the sphere in which the divine purpose operates, although the leading idea is that of the purpose itself, the infinite and sovereign grace of God.

The second stage of Paul's thought in this paragraph begins with *verse 7*. From *verses 7 to 12* he traces the outline of the work of Christ himself for our redemption. The purpose formed before the foundation of the world must be wrought out on the stage of human history and in human experience. The infinite and eternal clothes itself in the garments of the finite and earthly. This section (*verses 7 to 12*) contains the following steps of progress in the statement of Christ's historical work of redemption. 1. We are redeemed through his blood which was the purchase price (*verse 7*); 2. This results in the forgiveness of our trespasses through the riches of his grace (*verse 8*). 3. This redemption abounded toward us especially in the form of wisdom and prudence (*verse 8*). 4. The wisdom has particular reference to the hidden purpose of God, now disclosed by him through Christ and discovered by us as the result of his inworking for our redemption (*verse 9*). 5. All this is a part of God's general plan to sum up all things in Christ, heavenly and earthly (*verse 10*). Having thus brought his thought to a climax in the ideal of a universe restored in Christ, Paul once more swings back to the eternal purpose before all things, and on to the final glorious outcome following the historical work of Christ. In so doing he embraces our redemption as God's heritage among the particulars of the "all things" which are summed up in Christ (vii: 12). He then closes this second strophe of his praise with the words: "to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory" (*verse 12*).

We must now return and bring out more distinctly the meaning of some of the words and phrases of these verses. The word redemption in *verse 7* carries with it the idea of a price paid. Dr. Abbott in his commentary on Ephesians thinks redemption here means simply deliverance from the power of evil; and that the phrase "through his blood" favors the view since it introduces another idea, not that of ransom by payment of price but of sacrificial offering. This view is

8 [1]which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

[1]Or, wherewith he abounded.

scarcely justified. The word redemption has as its root meaning "a releasing affected by payment of a ransom." The word is a compound one based on a word which means the price paid for a ransom. In the New Testament as well as the Old the idea of ransom in combination with that of blood is familiar (see Matt. xx: 28; xxvi: 28; Rom. iii: 25; Acts ii: 38; Col. i: 14; Heb. ix: 15). Of course we are not to carry out the figure of a ransom in all its details, as the early theologians did and assume that Satan was the one to whom the ransom was paid since there was no one else to receive it. This is unwarranted. The New Testament nowhere asserts that a ransom was paid to the devil. Yet it does present the idea of Christ's death as a ransom very clearly and as careful interpreters we must recognize this. The necessity for Christ's redemptive act of suffering was deeply rooted in God, in man, and in the circumstances of the incarnation. The figure of the ransom price is justified by that necessity apart from any thought of the devil as man's captor in the literal military sense.

The phrase "according to the riches of his grace" is like many other expressions in Paul's various epistles. Grace is to him behind the whole movement of God in Christ redeeming the world. His experience as a Pharisee converted by the power of God led him especially to emphasize the principle of grace as opposed to that of works as the basis of salvation. The "wealth" or "riches" of grace simply sets forth its abounding nature. The statement in *verse 8* carries forward the thought in a striking way: "which he made to abound towards us in all wisdom and prudence." The word abound signifies literally "to overflow," to superabound. His grace overflowed to us and in the overflow it took the form of "wisdom and prudence." Christianity is a power in the soul which awakens it in every part. Knowledge, truth, wisdom, are among its fruits. The intellect shares in its regenerating energy. Hence it is opposed to forms of religion which exalt the feelings at the expense of the intellect and to those which suppress the action of the intellect by improper human authorities or by sacramental forms and ceremonies. Truth is the instrument of Christianity and ordinances only as they embody truth.

9 making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him 10 unto a dispensation of the fulness of the [1]times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things [2]in the

[1]Gr. seasons. [2]Gr. upon.

Feeling is of course a necessary element in Christian experience, but not feeling apart from the discernment of truth. "Wisdom" here means knowledge of God's great purpose. We thus share God's wisdom. "Prudence" means practical knowledge, wisdom in action. As Dr. Ellicott says wisdom in the New Testament takes on many forms as in Col. i: 9 where it is intelligence or wisdom in judgment; as in 1 Cor. xii: 8, where it is knowledge or wisdom in perception; as in Eph. i: 17, where it refers to the revelation by which wisdom is gained.

The contents of the wisdom are now pointed out. Really the wisdom the apostle is here emphasizing is "the mystery of his will." (*verse 9*). The word "mystery" as used by Paul ten times in Ephesians and Colossians and eleven times elsewhere in his writings, usually means not something mysterious or difficult to understand but, means rather a thing previously hidden but now brought to light, a secret revealed. Here of course it is the secret of God's eternal purpose in Christ. That purpose is further defined as working itself out in "a dispensation of the fulness of the times" (*verse 10*). "Times" is equivalent to "seasons" or periods, or dispensations. "The fulness of the times" means that in the coming of Christ all previous eras or "times" have reached their climax. The dispensation introduced by him is in many ways the summing up of previous periods and they were made for it. "The fulness of the times" was the ripening of the divine purpose in human history. This suggests that the principle of development or gradual preparation is an essential part of God's method. Great spiritual movements require time. Christ no doubt came as soon as conditions warranted it.

The fullness of the times, however, receives more exact definition in the words which follow and especially in the verb translated "to sum up." It is a word which means "to bring to a head again," The word "recapitulate" is formed in a similar way from a Latin word The dispensation of the fullness of times has as its chief object, in God's mind, the recapitulation or summing up, or bringing to a head,

of all things in Christ. Perhaps no single word in the entire epistle so fully expresses its central idea, the unity of all things in Jesus Christ. In Romans xiii: 9 the same word is used to express the idea of the summing up of all the commandments in the comprehensive "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Of course in the passage we are dealing with in Ephesians the "bringing to a head" or summing up relates not to a comprehensive command or abstract principle, but to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The middle voice is used to indicate that God is summing up all things in Christ for himself. The question has been raised whether the word means to "sum up again," that is, to restore a lost condition, or whether it means "to sum up one by one." In itself the word might convey either meaning. But the context certainly suggests restoration of a condition lost through trespasses. Besides this in Colossians i: 16-20, there is a closely related passage in which the idea of a return to a former condition, or restoration through Christ is very clearly indicated. In him were all things created. He was the mould and ideal of creation, and was before all things. His work as Messiah is to reconcile all things which have lapsed from the original pattern of creation. We must decide in favor of the first meaning of the word therefore: "to sum up again."

There is a rather unusual variation in the use of Greek prepositions in the expression "the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth." But the meaning is clear. All things physical and spiritual, heavenly and earthly, are embraced in the universal mediatorial work of Christ. This of course does not imply the salvation of all individuals since other teachings in Paul's writings and in the New Testament generally show the contrary. But there is a re-adjustment going on so that in the end the evil forces of the universe will be "summed up" through Christ as part of an orderly system, and subjected to the sway of God's will under the law of retribution.

This magnificent conception of creation unified in Jesus Christ is the underlying thought of the epistle. Every part of it is in its own way an illustration of this central idea. In Romans and Colossians and in John's writings there is greater emphasis upon the external universe as a part of the redemptive sphere of Christ. In Ephesians, while the larger realm comes into view, attention is concentrated

heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, *I say*, 11 in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his

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rather upon the union of all believers in Christ and especially of Jew and Gentile through his cross. The phrase "in Christ" is a clue and guide to the whole of the thought. In *verses 3 to 14* of chapter i the phrase or its equivalent occurs not less than twelve times. The heavenly blessings are "in Christ." We were chosen "in him;" the grace is freely bestowed "in the Beloved;" God's purpose is "in him;" "we were made a heritage "in him," etc.

The *eleventh verse* returns to the particular point the apostle is emphasizing, viz.: the salvation of men. All things are summed up by God in Christ, "in whom also we were made a heritage." "Were made a heritage" is the preferable translation of the Greek word. The root word means a lot. The verb in the active means to choose by lot, or allot. But there is a secondary meaning: to inherit, or become a heritage. The lot suggests the element of chance which is not in accord with the idea of God's Providence and strongly opposed to the words which follow. The idea of heritage therefore is that which is contained in the word here. The verb is passive, and hence means properly "we were treated as, or made a heritage in Christ." This is quite in harmony with Old Testament usage and with Ephesians ii: 18.

Paul is unable to explain the marvelous riches of God's grace in Christ save as the free action of God's sovereign will, and he continually returns to this idea in the passage before us. It is brought out with peculiar force by the form of expression employed here. We were made a heritage "having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will." God's will is the source and fountain-head of the saving grace. This does not carry with it the idea of arbitrariness, but rather of infinite and far-reaching wisdom. Men have often imagined that sovereign will is but another word for caprice or mere arbitrary choice. The infinite and sovereign will of God and the foreordination which attends its exercise, usually imply quite the reverse. It is infinite and manifold wisdom, far-reaching and far-seeing, a wisdom which works with means toward an end and which is infinitely gracious in its

will; 12 to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who [1]had before hoped in Christ: 13 in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the [2]gospel of your salvation,—in whom, hav-

[1]Or, have. [2]Gr good tidings. See marg. note on Mt. 4:23

attitude toward men as a whole. The aim of it all is "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (ii:7); and that "unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places* might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God." (iii: 10). There are similar passages in Romans and Colossians, wherein Paul dwells upon the wisdom of God in the execution of his redemptive love. We always get a partial and misleading view of God's redemptive activity in Christ unless we balance the idea of sovereign will with that of infinite wisdom, as the New Testament writers so constantly balance them.

The expression "after the counsel of his will" brings out God's sovereign action with peculiar force. "Counsel" means deliberate purpose or design, that which God sets before himself definitely to achieve. "Will" means will simply, or inclination. The former word suggests deliberation, the latter disposition. The phrase then may be taken as meaning, after the deliberate purpose of his desire. The latter word indicates his inner impulse to bless, his gracious inclination toward us. The former points to the distinct plan and design whereby he carries out his will.

In *verse 12* Paul reaches the end of this section of his hymn of thanksgiving with the words "that we should be unto the praise of his glory" and adds a final description of the subjects of God's grace which distinguish Jews and Gentiles: "we who had before hoped in Christ." He means "we Jews, who before the incarnation had a hope in the coming Messiah." Jews looked forward to the coming of Christ. Gentiles who cherished no such hope believed on him when he was preached to them.

He proceeds then in *verses 13 and 14* to outline briefly the spiritual history of the Gentiles to whom this epistle was written. "In whom ye also, etc.," ye Gentiles also as well as we Jews shared in the gospel privileges. "Having heard the word of the truth, the gospel, etc.," that is, the word whose content is truth, the gospel of

ing also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of *God's* own possession, unto the praise of his glory.

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your salvation, "having also believed, ye were sealed, etc." First came preaching and hearing. Then came faith. Then came the sealing with "the Holy Spirit of promise." The seal was stamped on wax to authenticate a document. Here the seal is the Holy Spirit. The seal placed upon the believer is not an outward sign merely like circumcision, but a spiritual bestowment. A seal in the ordinary sense of an outward mark, or badge, or impression, would be placed on things, but the Holy Spirit is the appropriate seal for persons. He comes to enlighten and guide and transform. His appeal is to all that is highest in us, our intelligence, our conscience, our will. He is the Holy Spirit of promise, not as communicating to us a promise, but as fulfilling a promise previously made. The Old Testament closes in some of the later prophets with a promise of the Holy Spirit. Peter quotes Joel on the day of Pentecost as having left the promise of the Holy Spirit. Then, too, Jesus had repeatedly promised the Holy Spirit.

This sealing with the Holy Spirit is not to be identified with some one particular phase of spiritual experience, such as assurance or other similar forms. Nor are we to understand that there was no action of the Spirit within the sinner until after faith was exercised. The Spirit attends the preaching of the Word of Truth convicting the sinner of his sins. But after faith is exercised the Spirit comes in increasing measure and becomes the most appropriate badge or sign of the divine presence in us and of God's ownership of us.

The Spirit is also an "earnest of our inheritance." (*verse 14*). An earnest was pledge money paid in advance for a purchase. There are three points which are to be noted here. The first is that as an earnest our present possession of the Holy Spirit is but a partial possession of our inheritance as Christians. The second is that the partial possession is the same in kind with the complete possession which is to be ours later. The third point is that the present partial possession is a guarantee of full possession in due time. All this suggests that in Paul's writings and in the New Testament generally no such radical

difference between the present and future life is recognized as is often supposed. The present life is identical in kind with the future life of the believer. In the next paragraph this point comes out with great force. The energy which wrought in Christ when God raised him from the dead is the power now working in us. So also in Col. ii: 20–iii: 4 and in Romans vi: 1ff. the present life of believers is a resurrection life. That is to say, our present spiritual life is the same kind of life as that which we shall possess after death, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us now is the pledge and guarantee of the resurrection of our bodies.

"Unto the redemption of God's own possession" (*verse 14*). The earnest of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee thus of the final complete redemption of God's possession. The word possession means a preserving, or a possession, as of one's own property, an obtaining. Combined with the word redemption, which carries with it the idea of a price paid it would naturally signify here the purchased possession of God. "The redemption of the purchase" would be an exact and literal rendering of the words, meaning the complete possession by God finally of that which had previously been redeemed. The present possession of the Holy Spirit is the earnest and guarantee of this ultimate possession by God of his inheritance in us and of our inheritance in him. Thus are combined the two preceding ideas of God's heritage (*verse 11*) and our inheritance (*verse 14*); his lot in us and our lot in him are both secured and guaranteed by his gift of the Holy Spirit to us and our possession partially of that gift in our present life. Here again the section closes with the shout of thanksgiving "unto the praise of his glory."

Looking back now over the ground we have covered we are impressed with the apostle's explanation of all history as the working out of an eternal purpose of God. Whatever else God designed in making the universe of suns and moons and stars, these were secondary to his supreme purpose of making sons who should bear his own image. For this purpose was formed before the foundation of the world. It had its birth in the boundless wealth of his wisdom and love. His method of making us sons was adoption into his family and communication to us of his own moral character. The means for the execution of his purpose was the incarnation of his Son whose redemptive death should crown his life of obedience. The outcome

15 For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is [1]among you, and [2]the love which *ye show* toward all the saints,

[1]Or, in. [2]Many ancient authorities omit, the love.

of his death was our redemption which in the first instance consisted of the forgiveness of sins, but which also superabounded in our enlightenment as to the mystery of his eternal purpose now revealed. As the original creation of nature, man, and angels was grounded in Christ, so now God's eternal purpose executes itself in a restoration of all things in him. He is the key to the meaning of the whole and the bond of all unity. The unity of believers with Christ and through him with one another, and in particular the unity of Jews and Gentiles in him, are the central point in the forward movement of God's eternal plan and purpose. The future unfolding of the eternal purpose is entirely in harmony with the past and present. It sweeps forward to the complete redemption of the purchased possession and final unification of all things in Christ. The passage before us is really an expansion of the eighth chapter of Romans with especial emphasis upon Christ as the unifying bond of creation. A passage like this answers many questions to which our faith gives rise. The new life in Christ which comes to us at conversion is so radical and revolutionary in its effects upon our inner life we at once desire to know how it is to be understood in relation to the world at large. Our Christian faith carries at its heart a complete philosophy of the universe. In Ephesians Paul unfolds that philosophy in some of its most vital aspects. Only it is not a philosophy based on the deductions of cold reason but arising as the necessary expression of a life experience which goes down to the foundation of all our hopes and reaches out to the ends of our destiny.

The Exaltation of Christ to Universal Sovereignty. 1: 15-23.

In the next paragraph (*verses 15-23*) Paul utters a prayer for the spiritual enlightenment of his readers. He prays first of all that they may have from God the gift of a spirit of wisdom and revelation and that this may result in the "full knowledge" of God. He then specifies three particulars in this vast knowledge which God is to teach them. 1. What is, the hope of the Christian calling. 2. What is, the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. 3. What is, that marvel-

ous fullness of power at work in believers. This power is then more exactly defined as the same power which raised Christ from the dead and exalted him to God's right hand and to universal Lordship.

In *verse 15* he says "for this cause" meaning all that he had said in the preceding outline of God's eternal purpose. In view of this purpose, and in view of his readers having believed the "word of the truth of the gospel," he also since the day he heard of their faith ceases not to pray for them. He describes their faith as "the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which *ye show* toward all the saints." This verse has several difficulties which must be briefly noted. First of all the word love, while retained by the American revisers, is excluded from the text and placed in the margin, as an alternative reading only, in the Canterbury revision. The Canterbury translators rejected the word, it would seem, on good grounds. It does not appear in the most ancient manuscripts. It is not difficult to account for its insertion by later copyists if it was absent from the earliest manuscripts. The sense is much simpler if we insert the word love than if we omit it. In order to simplify the reading, therefore, it might have been inserted. This would seem to find further warrant in Col. i: 4 where both forms of expression occur, "faith" and "love." It is, on the other hand, however, very difficult to explain the omission of "love" from our earliest manuscripts if it was present in Paul's original letter. We follow the earlier manuscripts and omit the word.

We spoke of the reading as being difficult without the word love. This of course does not mean an impossible reading without it. The difficulty grows out of the use of the expression "faith toward all the saints." This is a literal translation of the phrase. The revisers insert the words "which ye show" making it read "which ye show toward all the saints." Professor Beet in his commentary on Ephesians gives to the word here the sense of "faithfulness" and cites Romans iii: 3 as a parallel case, since there it is the "faithfulness" rather than the faith of God which the apostle has in mind. This is a possible meaning and makes good sense. The translation of the Canterbury revisers is also possible. Faith which ye show toward all the saints would be either faith in the sense of confidence in them, or faith which is recognized by all the saints as faith. It is faith which discerns faith in others. What we call faith is not always re-

16 cease not to give thanks for you, making mention *of you* in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the

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cognized as such by the unbelieving. These Christians to whom Paul is writing exhibited a faith which was recognized as such by all the saints who heard or knew of it.

There is also in the sentence the expression "faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you." This might mean a faith prevalent among you as if not possessed by all, or the faith of all of you. There does not seem to be any distinction in Paul's thought between believers and unbelievers here. His words "among you" simply indicates that it is their faith, the faith of the community of Christians of which he had heard and which called forth his thanksgiving. We note also a minor point confirming the view that this letter was written not to the Ephesian church alone but to a group of churches. He would scarcely have used the words "having heard" of your faith to the church at Ephesus alone, since he labored there a long time and was bound to the church by very tender ties.

In *verse 16* the apostle declares that he ceases not to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers. Of course the "cease not" is a hyperbole. He scarcely means it literally, yet he must have borne them constantly on his heart if not literally making mention of them always. To make mention of others in our prayers is a means of intensifying and deepening our desire for them, and it was a favorite method with Paul. In his confinement as a prisoner at Rome his heart would go out in strong yearning and desire for the churches scattered abroad, and now that his labors as an apostle were interrupted he would have special solicitude for those who had already accepted Christ by faith and were called upon to endure persecution for his sake.

The prayer continues in *verse 17*: "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him." "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ" means of course the God revealed in and through Christ. "The God of Abraham," "the God of our fathers," "the God of Israel" and similar forms of expression, denote the God believed in by Abraham, our fathers, etc. "The God of our Lord

Jesus Christ" is the God whose character and attitude toward men were fully disclosed only in and through Christ. The next clause defines the God of our Lord Jesus Christ more particularly as the "Father of glory." "The Father of glory" is the best name occurring to Paul in this particular connection as a suitable description of the God of Christ. The expression means usually the glory of God's manifested presence (see Ps. xxviii: 5; Acts vii: 2; 1 Cor. ii: 8; James ii: 1). Paul elsewhere speaks of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv: 6). It scarcely seems enough to say that the phrase in our passage means simply "the Father to whom belongs glory." "The Father of glory" rather points to such manifestation of the glory of God as displays his Fatherhood in an especial manner. This may be found in several directions. In Romans vi: 4 "Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father." Dr. Ellicott thinks reference is made in our passage to the glory of the divine nature manifested in the face of Jesus Christ the Son. The Father of glory would thus mean the Father thus glorifying himself or being glorified in Jesus Christ his Son. Since, moreover, the eternal purpose of God (*verse 5*) had in view our adoption as sons through Jesus Christ "the Father of glory" might imply the Father whose glory would be manifest in the fulfillment of his purpose in our adoption and finally in our glorification. We are unable to fix upon the particular manifestation of God's Fatherhood Paul has in mind in the phrase, but it seems clear that there is some such association of ideas as that indicated in what we have said. The most probable view is that which sees in the incarnation the manifestation of the glory of the divine Fatherhood.

"May give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation." Here the word spirit may mean the Holy Spirit. The word is without the article, however, and seems to mean rather a spirit receptive to wisdom and knowledge. The Holy Spirit is everywhere assumed to be the indwelling source of knowledge in Paul's writings. So much so in fact that it seems more natural to understand "a spirit" here in the sense indicated than to suppose he is praying that they might have the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" refers to the hidden mystery or secret of God now disclosed to men in the coming of Christ. Wisdom emphasizes the knowledge of God's eternal purpose and knowledge is a strong word

knowledge of him; 18 having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the

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which carries with it the idea of thorough knowledge. It is not *gnosis*, or knowledge simply, but *epignosis*, or thorough knowledge. As Paul had declared in *verses 8 and 9* that redemption had abounded or overflowed to his readers in wisdom and knowledge so here he prays that they may go on to complete knowledge of God and his thoughts for man. The contrast between *gnosis* (knowledge) and *epignosis* (thorough or full knowledge) is well brought out in 1 Cor. xiii: 12 where he says "Now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known." The verb for know in the two latter instances is the stronger, more intensified, form of the word while in the former it is the simpler form. Again we remark upon the power of Christianity to awaken knowledge. Our faith is not mere creed acceptance. Nor is it merely obedience to ecclesiastical authority. It is life, rather, awakening our whole nature, intellect, emotions and will. In John's writings knowledge in this larger sense is very clearly meant in his use of the word. And ordinarily the idea of knowledge as requiring the exercise of all our inner nature is thought of as a peculiarity of John. But Paul has it also, and it comes into notable expression in the passage before us. For in the next verse (18) he continues his prayer: "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened." Heart does not mean here our emotional nature alone. Primarily the word in Greek denotes the centre or seat of our physical being and also the centre or seat of our spiritual nature. From these meanings arise others. It means the understanding or seat of intelligence, or it means the will as the centre of the moral life; or the moral nature itself. Thus it becomes an inclusive word which concentrates in itself all that is meant by our moral, intellectual, and volitional natures; our personality in its moral and spiritual integrity. "The eyes of the heart" carries with it, then, the idea of the spiritual perception of truth. To be thus enlightened means moral cleansing and an obedient will as well as intellectual perception.

He next specifies the objects of the knowledge of the enlightened heart: "that ye may know what is the hope of his calling" (*verse 18*). That ye may understand the full significance of the hope which has come to you as believers. "His calling" means God's calling of you

glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working

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to be Christians, sons of God. The hope of his calling points to the glorious outcome in the future. In *verse 4* the apostle declares that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should "be holy and without blemish before him." This carries us out into the completed redemption, and undoubtedly the hope of his calling includes this in the vastness of its scope. It includes no doubt other aspects of the final redemption such as the resurrection of the body and conformity to Christ's image. In short, the completed kingdom of God in which we have a part.

"What the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." This refers back to *verse 11* where it is declared that we were made a heritage. The words mean God's heritage in us. In both places this seems to be the most natural interpretation. God is our portion and we are his portion. "The riches of the glory of his inheritance" refers to the fullness of glory which the saints shall reflect or embody as the medium or channel of God's self-manifestation to the universe. Through the church he will disclose his manifold wisdom, grace and power. As the medium of such disclosure it becomes, as it were, his inheritance, his wealth, his choice, and most precious possession.

The third object of knowledge specified here is "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe." The expression "exceeding greatness" is a quite strong one. "Exceeding" is from a verb (*huperballoo*) which means to throw beyond or across. The adjective means to surpass, to exceed, to transcend. "Surpassing or transcendent greatness" would thus be the meaning. The writer then proceeds to indicate the measure or degree of this surpassingly great power by the most striking and powerful instance of its action known to him;the resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ. In order to bring out forcibly the idea of God's power thus exerted he multiplies and heaps up forms of expression indicating the divine energy: "according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought, etc." The word for power means inherent ability, the measure of God's own force and might. "Working" means power in action. Here it is God's native or inherent power actually in exercise. "Strength" means this energy or active power mani-

of the strength of his might 20 which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in

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fested. "His might" means again his inherent power, that which belongs to his nature as God. The entire expression thus signifies: according to that energy of God's inherent strength made manifest in the resurrection of Christ, etc.

The three objects of knowledge having been stated, the last of which is God's power in Christians; and the matchless greatness of this power having been pointed out, the apostle now proceeds to describe more in detail the great events which displayed this power of God now working in Christian believers. *Verses 20 to 23* contain this description. The power of God is represented as (1) raising Christ from the dead; (2) making him sit at God's right hand in the heavenly places; (3) to a position thus above all forms of authority and power; (4) this Lordship extends not only over the present but also over the future age; (5) the same truth is then repeated from the other point of view to the effect that all things are put in subjection under his feet; (6) the Lordship is further indicated in that he is made head over all things to the church. The church itself is then described as the "fulness of him that filleth all in all."

In *verse 20* Paul proceeds to enumerate the results of God's exertion of his power: "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." This is in keeping with Paul's teaching everywhere as to the place of the resurrection of Christ in Christianity. The whole redemptive movement is coupled with that resurrection in a most emphatic manner. The power now at work in his hearers is just the continuance or prolongation of the energy of God which raised up Jesus from the dead. The present spiritual life of believers is as geniune an exhibition of that power of God as was the resurrection. Jesus and the resurrection was the burden of the early apostolic preaching. When we seek for the cause of the Christian movement in human history, therefore, we must never omit the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the prime factor. In that event was the nature of the movement made manifest. In it the redeeming power of God disclosed itself in its essential nature and triumphant might.

"And made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly *places*." Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts vii: 56;

the heavenly *places*, 21 far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this [1]world,

[1]Or, age.

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see also Ps. cx: 1). The right hand of God is of course the place of honor, dignity and power. "In the heavenlies" suggests a sphere above the earth, where God's throne is, at the right hand of which Christ sits on the mediatorial throne. The question naturally arises whether Christ's present reign is to be connected by us with a definite locality where he sits upon a throne. Some have so contended. It seems far more likely that the language here is figurative. The right hand of God scarcely means that God has a right and a left hand in the literal sense. If it be insisted that Stephen saw Christ at God's right hand it is equally true that Saul the persecutor saw him in another way on the Damascus road. At any rate there is no indication that Saul beheld him seated or standing at God's right hand. John saw him walking among the candlesticks (Rev. i: 13). That Christ now has a glorified body is clear from the New Testament records, and this would seem to suggest location. But we have no means of knowing what are the conditions of his present exalted life. He has very definite dealings with his people on earth through his Spirit. The "heavenlies" in which he now dwells is of course unlike our earthly sphere. Beyond this we cannot very well go. The figure which represents him as being seated at God's right hand is designed to indicate his office or function rather than to localize him in some particular place in the universe. The epistles of the captivity dwell upon Christ's exalted life in glory more than do the earlier epistles. Paul's mind seems to have moved forward steadily and consistently in his teaching as to the Person of Christ and his relations to the church and the world. In the last great group of epistles it is the exalted and glorified Christ who comes into special prominence, and his universal relations are set forth with especial fullness.

In *verse 21* we have an enumeration of authorities above which Christ is exalted. Several questions have been raised regarding these powers. 1. Are they earthly or heavenly powers? 2. Are they good or evil? 3. Is it a graded series which Paul mentions in a regular order? 4. Is he referring to actually existing orders of being or to those held in the popular opinion of the day? We answer these ques-

but also in that which is to come: 22 and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the

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tions in order. As to number one we note that the language here and in Colossians is quite general. In Colossians things in heaven and on earth, things visible and invisible are mentioned as having been created through Christ. It is most probable that here in Ephesians also the apostle does not mean to limit the "powers" to heaven or earth. So also the second question calls for a comprehensive reply. Good and evil forces alike seem to be indicated. As to question three, there is no conclusive evidence that the apostle has in mind a graded series. The order mentioned in Colossians is not identical with that in Ephesians, nor is it the reverse order. Moreover the lists are not precisely the same. As to question number four, Lightfoot probably gives the correct answer. Paul is here seeking to meet a prevalent view regarding angels and their mediation between God and man. There was an elaborate doctrine of angels held by some which was in conflict with right views of Christ. Paul's language sums up in a most comprehensive way all kinds of lordships and principalities. It is also best to regard these names as in some sense referring not to titles of actual beings, but rather to functions or offices performed by them. Christ has been exalted above every kind of headship (rule), every kind of supremacy (authority), every kind of potentate (power), every kind of lordship (dominion). Then follows a broad statement, "and every name that is named," in order to include any and all other forms of authority not mentioned in the enumeration. This again is broadened out in the words "not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." "This world" means this age, this dispensation; "that which is to come" means the age which shall succeed the coming of Christ. The two ages are the present gospel age and the age into which this age shall merge at the consummation.

"And he put all things in subjection under his feet." Compare Ps. viii: 6 and Heb. ii: 8. Not only has Christ been exalted to the highest place but a part of the divine plan and purpose was to subject the universe to him. Paul's insisting upon the subjection as well as the exaltation emphasizes his strong feeling that the arrangement was most fitting and in accordance with the great ends of God in the eternal plan for saving men.

church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Paul now introduces a figure which we often find in his writings, that of Christ as the head, and the church as his body. The human organism thus supplies a parallel for that vital and close union between Christ and his people which is taught in so many forms in the New Testament. John sets it forth under the figure of the vine and the branches (John xv: 1ff). Paul's favorite figure is that of the head and the body. God "gave him (Christ) to be head over all things to the church." God gave Christ to the church to be its head. As the head rules the body in all things so Christ is Lord over the church, "which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The word "fulness" as employed here may mean either that which is filled, or that which completes. In the former case it would mean that as the body of Christ his church is completely filled by him. All her gifts and graces, all her power for service, all her growth, all her activity are simply the result of the action of the head. In the latter case the "fulness" would mean the complement, that is, the body is necessary to complete the head. Christ is of course not imperfect and needing completion. But the figure of the head calls for the figure of the body to complete it. In so far then as Christ is the head of a body he is incomplete without the body. The incompleteness of course does not arise from any deficiency in Christ, but from the nature of the figure employed to express Christ's relations to the church. On the whole, however, it seems more likely that the former meaning is the correct one. In chapter four, *verses 4 to 16* we have a good commentary on the meaning of the words here. It will be noted that the figure of the body runs through the passage in chapter four. And the gifts of Christ, the head, are enumerated at length. The object of the bestowment of the gifts is the growth and symmetry, and completeness of the body. Of course this meaning does not exclude the other. If the church is the "fulness" of Christ because it receives all its gifts and graces from Christ, it is also true that the church is the complement or completion of Christ, as the body is the completion of the head.

2 And you *did he make alive,* when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, 2 wherein ye once walked according to the [1]course

[1]Gr. age.

THE POWER OF GOD MANIFESTED IN THE SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION OF MEN. II.: 1-10.

The first *ten verses* of chapter two continue the thought of God's power toward Christians. The measure of that power is seen in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ to the place of supreme dominion as we have just seen. This raising of Christ to the highest place and the subjection of all things to him is the initial stage and the ground of the final summing up or "bringing to a head" of all things in Christ. Christianity is the same in all its parts. The quickening of sinners is just the continued putting forth of the resurrection power. The regenerate are already spiritually raised from the dead. To make clear the successive stages of the grand unification of all things in Christ the apostle proceeds to enumerate certain phases of the working of the power of God which wrought so mightily in the first instance in Christ's resurrection.

"And you did he make alive, etc." (ii: 1). You did he make alive, "when ye were dead." Death is the favorite term of Paul to describe the spiritual state of the unregenerate. It means, of course, beyond all human power, and requiring a divine energy to restore. The word here describes the present moral condition of the sinner and does not, as some have thought, have the meaning "exposed to eternal death." The act of making alive was past and the death was a state then existing, not something yet future. The death which thus reigns in the sinner's heart is a death in "trespasses and sins." These two words are very similar in meaning. Trespass means to fall down or aside from the path; and sins is from a word which means to miss the mark. In both cases there is failure to pursue a given course. It is defect of conduct which is expressed particularly by the words, although of course the sinful conduct is based on what is inherent in the disposition. Now follows a further description of man in his natural state. The passage is one of the most complete of its kind in all Paul's writings.

"According to the course of this world." The exact translation is "the age of this world." "Age" is from the word signifying a

of this world, according to the prince of the [1]powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; 3 among whom

[1]Gr. power.

period of time, and "world" designates the physical or sensuous world. The general meaning is according to the ongoing of this outward sensuous world. The world in time and space is what the apostle has in mind, and he means to contrast this temporal world and its outward pomp and lusts with the higher spiritual universe in which redeeming power is at work for men's salvation.

"According to the prince of the powers of the air." The word powers is an inaccurate translation. It is given correctly in the Canterbury revision. It is a singular not a plural word: "prince of the power of the air" is the correct rendering. Prince of course means chief ruler. In John xii: 31, xiv: 30 and xvi: 11, there are similar references. Satan is the prince of the power of the air. "Power of the air" is an expression meaning perhaps in a collective sense the powers of the air. These powers are thought of as a single power, although there may be many individual powers included. The air was thought of as the sphere of activity of the evil powers. It is their dwelling place, as it were.

"Of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." Here spirit is in apposition with power. "The prince of the spirit" seems a harsh expression. But it is the most natural meaning here. As the prince is the ruler of the power or powers of the air, so in turn these powers or this power may be regarded as the spirit now at work among sinners. Thus spirit would denote not so much a particular spirit as a principle of conduct common to all the sons of disobedience.

In *verse 1* Paul begins with a reference to his Gentile readers and his statements so far have had special reference to them. In *verse 3* however, he includes the Jews along with the Gentiles. "Among whom," that is, the sons of disobedience, "we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desire of the flesh and of the mind." It is very important in order to understand Paul's teaching as to the flesh here to know the senses in which he employs the word in his writings generally. Flesh with Paul does not mean the flesh literally, as if he were referring simply and only to our bodies. Of course,

we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the [1]mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even

[1]Gr. thoughts.

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the body is the flesh and he includes it. But in his teaching the body is regarded not as sinful because it is material and physical. As such it has no moral quality whatever. As such, however, the body becomes the source of certain desires and appetites which in a moral being, like man, lead to sinful acts, and a sinful disposition. Indeed in some instances the word flesh in Paul's writings has no direct reference to the body at all. See Gal. v: 19, 22 and Col. ii: 18. Flesh means in general with Paul the sinful disposition or mind of man. It is our moral nature as corrupted by sin.

"In the lusts" means in the desires "of our flesh." Desires refers to the impulses or propensities to evil. The next clause indicates the carrying out of the desires in act: "doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind." The mental life is drawn into the exercise of the fleshly appetites and the will executes the evil desires.

"And were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." Two expressions here need a few words of explanation. "Children of wrath" is an example of a very common scriptural usage where a "son" or "child" of anything means one exposed to a danger of a particular kind. "Son of stripes" means worthy of stripes (Deut. xxv: 2). A "son of death" is one worthy of death (1 Sam. xxvi: 16). "The son of perdition" means one destined to perdition (John xvii:12). Children of wrath in our passage means those exposed to the wrath of God. Dr. Abbott argues that there is no reference here to the wrath of God since Paul in the next sentence gives special emphasis to the love of God. But in Romans i:18-32 Paul very clearly describes the wrath of God against sinners. To understand a reference to God's wrath here would be in harmony with the teaching of Paul in Romans. Besides there is no source of wrath other than that of God which would be in point in the connection here. "Children of wrath" would mean, then, children in danger of the wrath of God.

The other expression is "by nature." The word thus translated has been the occasion for great divergence of views among commentators. Does it mean "by birth"? and does this mean that man is wholly bad with no good impulses? Does it imply that infants are

as the rest:—4 but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love where-

objects of God's wrath the moment they are born? Does it mean that human nature is but another name for sin and guilt? There is another passage in which the same expression occurs which we may glance at as an aid in interpreting the meaning here. In Romans ii:14,15 we read "Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, etc." The word here translated "by nature" is precisely that in our passage. In the one case men by nature do the things of the law, in the other they are by nature children of wrath. The word itself, however, probably means in both passages very nearly the same thing. Perhaps we might express it by the phrase "in their natural state." There is perhaps no direct reference to birth, and in the passage in Romans it seems scarcely correct to make it refer to "original" sin in the doctrinal and theological sense. For there the Gentiles "by nature" obey the law in some sense. In both passages it seems most likely that a contrast is implied between the privileges and condition of men naturally and those of men to whom God has revealed himself in grace. Paul clearly teaches elsewhere our hereditary relations with Adam, and in his view the sinful state of the race is due to its hereditary connection with him (see Rom. v: 12-21). Of course the ideas of birth and heredity are in the background when Paul makes a reference in these two passages to the natural state; but the connection in both the Roman and Ephesian passages indicates that "by nature" means "in the natural state" or "naturally" without specific reference to birth or heredity. The Jews then were just like Gentiles "by nature," and exposed to wrath. There were certain privileges enjoyed by them as the covenant people but this did not exempt them from the necessity of regeneration.

In *verse 4* Paul turns to the other side of the picture. Those who were dead received life from God. Behind God's act of life-giving was his great love. "But God, being rich in mercy" suggests the extreme state of hopelessness into which spiritual death had brought them. A wealth of mercy was needed. God was rich in long-suffering and patient love. "For his great love wherewith he loved us." On account of the superabundant compassion of God. The riches of

with he loved us, 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together [1]with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), 6 and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the

[1]Some ancient authorities read, in Christ.

his mercy as shown in outward act came as the result of his inherent desire to bless us. The words are quite emphatic as to the magnitude of God's love. The emphasis continues in the next clause: "even when we were dead through our trespasses." Our trespasses and spiritual death did not deter him from manifesting the wealth of his love. Trespasses here refers back to *verse 1*. "Made us alive together with Christ." That is, in accordance with *verses 19 and 20* in chapter one, the resurrection power which wrought in Christ has been exhibited in their spiritual renewal also. "And raised us up with him." Thus the resurrection power is specified. Christians have already experienced a spiritual resurrection. The parentheses in *verse 5* "by grace have ye been saved" is a reminder thrown in to keep before the reader the general teaching as to grace which underlies all the apostle is saying. "And made us to sit with him in the heavenly *places*, in Christ Jesus." This form of expression "the heavenly *places*" we have already encountered. Here the whole spiritual universe is thought of as a unity, and believers are regarded as sitting side by side with Christ therein even in their present life. The effects of Christ's resurrection are all coupled with the resurrection itself, so that we were raised by anticipation when he was raised. Then actually we were spiritually raised when the Spirit regenerated us. So now we sit with Christ in the heavenlies. All this makes very striking and clear the unity of this epistle. The apostle is remarkable exact in all his statements in relation to his fundamental thought: the unity of all things in Christ. Christianity is the continuance of Christ's resurrection. It is a distinct order of life with its peculiar cause and method and result. It is, as such, the working out of the eternal purpose of God to sum up all things in Christ.

"That in the ages to come." All future ages in time and eternity are included. Paul foresaw the ages as the succeeded each other in a grand procession, as it were, and in each epoch the glorious purpose of God was to be exhibited. "He might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." God will place

heavenly *places*, in Christ Jesus: 7 that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus: 8 for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not of works, that no man should glory. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

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on exhibition through future ages the achievements of his love in and through Christ. What he is now doing is not a mere incident, a subordinate part in some larger plan. It is the plan itself. It is not the variation but the theme itself. It will therefore be kept to the front as his chief work in coming ages. Other plans he has, no doubt, but none of them will eclipse this or render it an insignificant part. For through the church he is to show "the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us" (*verse 7*).

Again Paul reminds them that their salvation is by grace through faith (*verse 8*). Grace is the active principle. This means not merely that God was found by men who sought him. He himself in grace sought men and found them through Christ. "Through faith" means on condition of faith. It is not "on account of faith" as if faith were the ground. "And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." In this statement the words "that" and "gift" are not to be referred separately or together to either one of the preceding words "grace" or "faith." Both of them rather refer to the whole statement or process of salvation. "That" means not "that salvation" merely, nor "that grace" merely, nor "that faith" merely, but rather "that salvation which is by grace through faith." "Gift" should be so understood also. In *verse 9* he continues: "not of works, that no man should glory." There is little in this epistle and the epistles of the captivity of Paul's controversial attitude against salvation by works, not because of any change in his views, but because he has passed to higher teaching and there does not exist the same need as in the Roman and Galatian epistles. Yet he would not have his readers draw any wrong inference as to the principles of salvation. So he throws in these broad statements covering briefly the whole argument in Romans.

In *verse 10* he traces the whole process of salvation back to the eternal purpose of God. The statement is closely connected with i: 4, 5 in which he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world

11 Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision,

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that we should be "holy and without blemish before him in love." We are declared to be "his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God before prepared that we should walk in them" (*verse 10*). Here there are four distinct declarations. First the whole enterprise is God's. We are his workmanship. It did not have a human origin, nor is it dependent primarily on human causes. Second it is a creative work of God. "Created in Christ Jesus" probably refers first of all to our regeneration, but there is implied a reference to our original creation as well. Third, God's end for us is "good works." What he set out to accomplish was a perfected moral kingdom. The place of Christ in that kingdom is central and vital everywhere and always. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works. The good works were a part of the eternal purpose and our regeneration was with a view to our performance of them. Fourth, we are to walk in the good works which God prepared beforehand and for which we were created in Christ Jesus. Thus our wills are to come into play. God's creation among free creatures is unlike the creation of physical objects. Moral values and activities call for the free response of moral beings. This free response is the glory of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

In the passage ii: 1-10 the power of God for Jew and Gentile alike is shown to be parallel to that power which raised Christ from the dead. The first great stage in the summing up of all things in Christ was the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. (i: 19-23). The second was the spiritual resurrection of his readers in and through Christ and their exaltation to the heavenly realms with him (ii: 1-10). The third stage Paul proceeds to indicate in the next paragraph.

The Unification of Jew and Gentile in Christ. (ii: 11-22.)

In this passage the former state of the Gentiles is described and this is followed by an account of their union with the Jews in Christ. Paul exhorts them to remember their former state as "Gentiles in the flesh." This is in contrast with "Circumcision in the flesh" which immediately follows. The Circumcision, or Jews, called the Gentiles Uncircumcision, and this was the chief distinction between

in the flesh, made by hands; 12 that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God

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the two in the minds of Jews. But Paul adds the words "made by hands" in reference to the Circumcision itself. He thus suggests that the whole distinction between circumcision and the uncircumcision so highly esteemed by Jews was superficial. He contrasts the true spiritual circumcision with the fleshly in other places, as in Col. ii: 11 and Phil. iii: 2ff, Rom. ii: 28, 29.

He passes to other and darker phases of their condition in sin in *verse 12*. "Separate from Christ" means of course apart from Christ, and is in sharp contrast with the expression which occurs so often in this epistle "in Christ." The phrase "in Christ" sums up all blessings, while "without Christ" or "separate from Christ" sums up all spiritual disaster and evil. "Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel" means outside the theocracy of God's chosen people. The word is "alienated" not "aliens," and probably suggests a lapse from an original state, to which they are restored in Christ. Christ's work in this epistle, as we have seen, is regarded as restoring a lost state of man. As Gentiles they were also "strangers from the covenants of the promise." There was a covenant of God with the race of man after the flood (Genesis ix: 6ff). But the covenants of the promise here refer to the numerous covenants of God with Abraham, and Moses and others in which special messianic promises were given. These were the peculiar promises to Israel. And yet Gentiles were to share in the end in these promises. The covenants, however, were not with Gentiles but for them through Israel. Hence the Gentiles were strangers to them. "Having no hope and without God in the world." This does not mean the absence of all hope from their thoughts but rather the absence of well-grounded hope. Nearly all peoples have cherished a hope of a future life, but until Christ came there was little solid ground on which it could rest. The Gentiles were without hope in this real and substantial sense. Without God, again, does not mean the absence of any and all conception of a god. It means rather without the true God.

In *verse 13* the apostle returns to his favorite phrase "in Christ Jesus." Those who were far off are made nigh "in the blood of

in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, 15 having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two

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Christ." He begins his declaration "in Christ Jesus" and ends it with "in the blood," etc. The latter expression simply specifies more particularly how the unity and nearness are brought about.

"For he is our peace." Christ's humanity is the bond of all unity between the separated parts of the race. In his person the parts all share as they accept him. There follows here a detailed unfolding of the assertion "he is our peace" indicating how the peace is secured He "brake down the middle wall of partition." There was a wall or partition separating the Court of the Gentiles from the Temple at Jerusalem. The penalty of death was threatened to any alien who passed it. Paul does not refer here to this partition literally, meaning that the wall of separation in the temple itself had been demolished. But it may well be that his strong figure of speech is based on the existence of the partition which separated Jew and Gentile in the temple.

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." "In his flesh naturally refers back to "in the blood of Christ" in *verse 13*. The "enmity" was that between Jew and Gentiles. "The law of commandments *contained* in ordinances" means the commands of God which separated the Jews from other peoples. Reference is made to the ceremonial law in part. "Ordinances" means authoritative decrees. Paul has in mind the whole legal system of the Jews. It is called the enmity because it was this system which kept the Jews apart from Gentiles. The wall of partition in the Jewish Temple was the result of this exclusiveness of the law of outward commandments. Christ has abolished it in the sense that he has superseded it, carried it beyond its original outward meaning, fulfilled it, and by his death has introduced a new principle of union between Jew and Gentile and of reconciliation between God and man.

"That he might create in himself of the two one new man." The "new man" is a phrase used a number of times in these epistles. Jew and Gentile alike lose their old standing as soon as they are joined unto Christ. The change in them is a new creation by him. The old

one new man, *so* making peace; 16 and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity there-

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differences come to an end and they are essentially one in him. The phrase "*so* making peace" means peace between Jew and Gentile in this immediate connection. But this peace is grounded in the deeper peace which is made between God and man through the death of Christ.

In the next verse (*verse 16*) he proceeds to indicate how the death of Christ brings Jew and Gentile alike into harmonious relations with God: "and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross." To reconcile here carries with it the idea of a restoration. Literally it means "to reconcile back again." We have already had occasion several times to point out the occurrence of the thought of restoration in this epistle. It is found also in Colossians brought out quite strongly (see Col. i: 20-21). The redemption in Christ is a restoration and a completion. Man is restored from a fall into sin. It is also true that human nature is carried forward to a higher plane than it had previously attained. The new spiritual principle in Christ is so much higher than the natural man that Paul most fittingly calls it a new man.

The "one body" referred to here is not the one body of Christ but the one body of the one new man in which Jew and Gentile unite in Christ. The figure of the body pervades this epistle in many places The church which contains Jews and Gentiles finds its deepest and broadest unity in Christ.

"Having slain the enmity thereby." In Colossians a similar statement is found. Christ is there declared to have "blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us --- nailing it to the cross" (Col. ii: 14). Here Christ "slays the enmity by the cross," the enmity between Jew and Gentile and between God and man. In the preceding verse he is said to have abolished the enmity which was the law of commandments, etc. He abolished and slew the enmity by fulfilling and superseding the law of outward commandments. The "slaying" suggests the figure of a living enemy who opposed the peace between God and man and man and man. Christ encountered and slew this hostile power.

by: 17 and he came and [1]preached peace to you that were far off and peace to them that were nigh: 18 for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father. 19 So then ye are no more

[1]Gr. brought good tidings of peace. Comp. Mt. 11.5.

Verse 17 declares that Christ came and "preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh." Does this mean the preaching of Jesus personally during the earthly ministry or his preaching through the disciples after the death and resurrection? While on earth of course Jesus did preach peace to men. But the connection of thought here makes it more natural to understand a reference to the preaching of the followers of Jesus after the death and resurrection. The reasons are two. First, the argument calls for the peace secured by the death on the cross rather than the peace proclaimed before that death. The statement in the preceding verse definitely connects the reconciliation with the cross. Secondly, Jesus did not go in person and preach peace to those who "were far off," that is, the Gentiles. The disciples and especially the apostles did this afterwards. After his resurrection he breathes on them the Holy Spirit and leaves his peace with them, but he commissions them to go and preach peace to those who were "far off." (Luke xxiv: 36; John xx: 12ff.)

Verse 18 declares that Christ gives us access or admission to the Father. He opens the way into the Royal Presence. This access is "in one Spirit." Through Christ we (Jew and Gentile) "have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." Here again Paul's Trinitarian doctrine comes into clear expression just as it does in several other passages in this epistle.

In the remaining verses of the chapter Paul sums up his preceding statements regarding the calling of the Gentiles and describes the new standing they have obtained in Christ. It will be noted that this new standing is described in terms which correspond closely with the terms of alienation from God in *verse 12*. "Ye are no more strangers and sojourners:" strangers were foreigners, and sojourners were resident foreigners, or aliens who lived in the city, but were without any of the rights of citizens. "Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints." In *verse 12* they are described as having been previously alienated from the "commonwealth of Israel." Now they have full

strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom [1]each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy [2]temple in the Lord; 22 in whom ye also are builded together [3]for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

[1]Gr. every building. [2]Or, sanctuary. [3]Gr. into.

citizenship in that commonwealth. In the next clause the apostle changes the figure from commonwealth to family or household. They are now members of God's household as well as citizens in the spiritual state. The "saints" in the first state refers to those who belong to God whether Jew or Christian.

In *verse 20* the building is described as to its foundation. "Apostles and prophets" refers to the twelve apostles and to the prophets of New Testament churches. It is incorrect to take "prophets" here as referring to Old Testament prophets. In iii: 5 and iv: 11 there are references to the prophets in the churches which explain the reference here. God's eternal purpose has now been revealed to apostles and prophets, and prophets are among Christ's gifts to his church. A prophet was an inspired person who taught God's truth to the people and as such was essential to the growth of the church. The question whether apostles and prophets or their teachings, are meant when they are declared to be a part of the foundation is really not a very important one. The form of statement seems to require that they themselves rather than their teachings are meant. Yet they can be so meant only as discharging their functions as teachers and leaders. It seems strange that any others besides Christ should be described as a part of the foundation. But it will be noted that Christ as "the chief corner stone" is distinguished from the rest of the foundation, so that apostles and prophets were a part of the foundation only in a derivative and secondary way.

Verse 21 gives an important variation from the King James Version: "In whom each several building," etc., "groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." The outcome is "a holy temple," but there is a growth or progress which culminates thus. "All the building" therefore seems scarcely a correct translation of the Greek words. The article is wanting in the Greek, and the more accurate rendering is "each several building" as in the American Standard Revision. But

3 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,—2 if so be that ye have heard of the [1]dispensation of

[1]Or, stewardship.

this again can scarcely mean a group of separate and detached buildings which are growing into a holy temple. The figure is rather that of a great edifice with many parts which are growing together into the unity of a splendid temple, all the parts conforming to the general plan and adding to the symmetry of the whole. Each several building is fitly framed together or joined to the larger whole. Thus the church universal presents to Paul's mind the unity of a vast spiritual edifice built upon the true foundation of Christ and of apostles and prophets who are his agents in rearing the structure.

"In whom ye also are builded together," etc. The meaning is that the readers of the epistle are a part of this vast temple. They are builded together along with all the other parts "for a habitation of God in the Spirit." The church is God's dwelling. Believers are temples of the Holy Spirit, and the body of believers is also his temple.

Paul's Apostleship God's Chosen Means for Making Known the Unity of Jews and Gentiles. (III: 1-9.)

"For this cause": in view of what has just been said as to their calling. "I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ in behalf of you Gentiles." Paul was a prisoner when he wrote this epistle. He was a prisoner of Jesus Christ, because he now recognized the will of Christ as controlling in all the events of his life. This harmonizes with his general view of Christ as controlling the ongoing of the world and guiding history to a predestined goal. He was the prisoner of Christ in a special sense in behalf of the Gentiles since his ministry and apostleship were in the interest of Gentiles, and the events leading to his imprisonment were connected with his mission to the Gentiles directly or indirectly. After beginning with the words, "I Paul," etc, he makes a long digression and only returns to his main idea in *verse 14* where he begins his notable prayer for the readers. The verses which follow down to *verse 13* describe his apostleship to the Gentiles and its predestined outcome.

"If so be that ye have heard," etc. The long digression begins here. Paul gives in detail the outlines of his apostleship in its origin,

that grace of God which was given me to you-ward; 3 how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, 4 whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; 5 which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed

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and end, and result. Paul would scarcely have written "if so be that ye have heard," etc, to the church at Ephesus, had the epistle been directed to this church alone. For Paul had spent a long time at Ephesus and his mission to the Gentiles was known to the church there. "The dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward." This statement means that dispensation which the grace of God bestowed upon me in reference to you. Paul does not here say that a dispensation was given to him, but that grace was given him. The arrangement or dispensation was an arrangement or dispensation of grace, viz., the grace bestowed upon him.

"How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery." Paul ever insisted that his apostolic mission was due directly to Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. In Galatians he emphasizes this fact very strongly. He was not an apostle through his own choice or through human appointment but by the will of God (see Gal. i: 12; 2 Cor. xii: 17). "The mystery" in the connection here is seen to be the union of Gentiles and Jews in Christ. "The mystery" varies somewhat in meaning as it is employed in various places in Ephesians and Colossians. Yet it always means essentially the same thing. It means in Ephesians i: 9 the purpose of God to sum up all things in Christ. Here it is defined in *verse 6* as the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. But this, of course, is simply one particular under the more general idea of the summing up.

"As I wrote before in few words." This does not refer to a previous epistle, but to what he had already previously written in this epistle. The expression is equivalent to "as I have written above" (Compare i: 13; ii: 1, 12, 16, 19.)

In *verse 5* again Paul emphasizes the fact that by revelation this mystery was made known. It was through struggle and opposition that Paul's mission to the Gentiles was carried on at first. At length, however, the right of Gentiles to gospel privileges was recognized. Now Paul can say that this mystery has been revealed generally to "holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit." "Prophets"

unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 *to wit*, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the [1]gospel, 7 whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to [2]preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

[1]Gr. good tidings. See Mt. 4.23 marg. [2]Gr. bring good tidings of the etc. Comp. ch.2.17.

here refers to the prophets of the New Testament, not those of the Old. The term "holy" does not indicate at all that Paul regarded apostles and prophets as possessing peculiar sanctity either in a personal sense or as belonging to an ecclesiastical order which possessed it. In *verse 8* he calls himself "less than the least of all saints." The word "holy" means set apart to the service of God and was applied by Paul repeatedly to the members of the churches generally in his various epistles.

What, then, was the mystery thus made known? That the "Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus." The heirship describes their equal rights as members of God's family. Being fellow-members of the body carries on the figure of the church as the body of Christ and the equality of Gentiles as sharing therein. Being fellow-partakers of the promise in the gospel points out all that is included in the blessings of the gospel, those already enjoyed as fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body and those yet future, to be realized in coming times in the Messianic kingdom. All these blessings are realized "in Christ Jesus." The idea is not of Christ as the means of obtaining these blessings. It is rather that of union with Christ. Being "in Christ" they are in the sphere for obtaining the blessings. All things are theirs in Christ.

In *verse 7* Paul refers once more to his ministry as the result of God's appointment: "according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power." Paul's strength as an apostle was the result of his intense and ever-vivid sense of his divine call to the work. Nothing else could sustain him amid the trials and difficulties of his career. "According to the working (energy) of his power" describes his sense of the divine grace at work in him as the result of his divine call to the work

9 and to [1]make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery

[1]Some ancient authorities read, bring to light what is.

In the next verse, as if in view of these things, overcome by a sense of his own unworthiness he says: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints was this grace given." In another passage Paul says of himself that he is the least of the apostles (1 Cor. xv: 9), and in still another that he is chief of sinners (1 Tim. i: 15). Humility is the direct and immediate product of the grace of God in the heart. It is, as it were, the reflex of God's action in us. The great saints and the great apostles have ever been men of great humility.

"The unsearchable riches of Christ" means the untraceable or untrackable riches. The emphasis is upon the abounding fullness of blessing in Christ and upon its hidden source in the depths of the divine love. We may trace this love of God back part of the way and understand it in some measure. But finally we lose the trail, as it were, since it leads back into the infinite and unfathomable depths of the divine nature.

In *verse 9* he continues the thought of proclaiming the unsearchable riches by adding "and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery," etc. In proclaiming the gospel he causes the light to shine before men. There is no longer any concealment of the mystery. Its present proclamation by him is part of the dispensation of the mystery itself. Of course Paul could not "make all men see" in the sense that he could regenerate the blinded eyes and hearts of men. Only the Spirit of God could do this. But this proclamation of truth was the means employed by the Spirit to work the inward change. He regenerates through the truth. "The dispensation of the mystery" means that the present disclosure of God's previously hidden purpose is a part of the divine arrangement.

"Which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things." The purpose of God was an eternal one, hidden in his secret counsels in the past, but now proclaimed. The phrase "who created all things" is thrown in to show the unity of God's plan in all parts of his creation. No doubt the phrase suggests God's sovereignty and freedom in all that he does. The infinite Creator has a right to conceive and execute a plan so transcendent and wonderful. But there is also the idea of harmony between creation at large and the special

which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; 10 to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places* might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 according to the [1]eternal purpose which he

[1]Gr. purpose of the ages.

redemptive work in Christ. He who created all things in laying the foundations of the world and bringing forth this orderly universe which we see about us carried in his thought, hitherto concealed even from angels, his purpose of grace in Christ. All this is but an unfolding of the thought contained in the first paragraph of chapter 1, *verses 3 to 14.*

God's Manifold Wisdom Displayed through the Church. (III: 10-13.)

In *verse 10* he proceeds to indicate the result in the disclosure to "the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places" in and through the church "of the manifold wisdom of God." Principalities and powers refers to heavenly intelligences. Peter declares that angels desire to look into the things of grace (1 Pet. i: 12). There was in God's purpose a mystery known only to him, and in the church the whole spiritual universe discovers a new unfolding of God's infinite and manifold wisdom. "Manifold wisdom" means literally much varied wisdom. There is no further suggestion directly as to wherein this manifoldness consists. But we may gather something as to what the word implies by the general connection in which it occurs. The following elements would enter into the thought. First, the startling and unexpected union of Jew and Gentile. Equally unexpected was the abolition of the old Jewish institutions which had so long served the ends of the covenant people. The principle of faith itself which made it possible to extend gospel privileges to all men was an instance of the marvelous wisdom of God. Then, too, the fact that the gospel fits so perfectly into the general plan of creation, and was made to harmonize with so many apparently discordant elements and movements. All these things are suggested in the immediate connection and no doubt were in some measure present in Paul's thought as he referred to the "much varied" wisdom of God and its disclosure to the universe through the church. God's means were much varied,

purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12 in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through [1]our faith in him. 13 Wherefore I ask that [2]ye may not faint at my tribulations for you, which [3]are your glory.

[1]Or, the faith of him. [2]Or, I. [3]Or, is.

they were employed under a great variety of conditions, and the ultimate outcome will be rich and manifold in further disclosures of the infinitude and spiritual riches in Christ Jesus.

All this was "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Literally this reads "the purpose of the ages." It could be translated "purpose which he purposed" as in the text, or "purpose which he made" or "purpose which he executed or accomplished." The translation of the American revisers is probably correct, "purpose which he purposed." Yet in all this epistle Paul shows a tendency to unify his great ideas by means of very general words which comprehend all the shades of meaning. There is implied in the word "purposed" (literally "made") the idea of fulfillment also. This purpose was formed "in Christ Jesus our Lord." Always Paul returns to this as the central thought of his gospel. All is conceived and executed in and through Christ.

In *verse 12* he returns to the privileges we enjoy in our spiritual life as the result of the working out of the eternal purpose. "Boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him" describes our relations to God as members of his family. We are not fearful of God's wrath, nor do we doubt his love. There is no longer a sense of barrier between him and ourselves. The word for "boldness" here means assurance or unreservedness in speech, freedom to say what is in our hearts. "Access" means freedom of approach to God. The statement then means "in whom we have freedom of utterance and freedom of access in confidence through our faith in him."

Verse 13 is most probably incorrectly translated "wherefore I ask that I may not faint, etc." The Greek admits of this as a possible rendering, but it is also quite possible to translate: "that ye may not faint." It would be wholly out of keeping with Paul's usual attitude to say he was praying that he might not faint. Everywhere he is full of confidence in his endurance of trial. He has just been dwelling upon the indescribable riches of the grace of God and is full of humility and gratitude for the overwhelming goodness of

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, 15 from whom every [1]family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that

[1]Gr. fatherhood.

God in permitting him to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. His whole temper is one of triumph and gratitude. It seems therefore a complete anti-climax to make him say "I am praying that I may not faint, etc." Evidently the words mean: "I ask that ye may not faint." This is confirmed not only by the fact of his courage and cheerfulness in trial as recorded elsewhere in many places in his epistles, but by the next clause: "which are your glory." My tribulations for you are your glory, therefore be not discouraged on their account. "Your glory" here might mean that his tribulations would result in their greater glory. More likely, however, he means that the causes which have brought tribulation to him, viz., the fleshly opposition of men, and the hostility of the world, do but bring into greater prominence their own spiritual life to which his ministry was devoted. It spoke the highest things for their spiritual life when its furtherance was secured by his intense sufferings.

Paul's Prayer for His Readers. (III: 14-21).

In *verse 14* Paul takes up again the interrupted thought of *verse 1*. "For this cause" is the phrase in *verse 1*, but this is followed by a long digression ending with *verse 13*. Returning to his first thought he records a prayer of marvelous sweep and elevation. "For this cause" refers back to what he had been saying in Chapter ii as to the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. "I bow my knees." Prayer in the Bible was made kneeling or standing (see Mark xi: 25; Luke xviii: 11). "From whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." The point of difficulty here is as to the meaning of "every family in heaven." The word means family, not fatherhood, and it is not clear what Paul has in mind when he refers to every family in heaven, whether he is thinking of groups of angelic beings under different heads or leaders, or to the whole family of heaven of whom God is Father. The earthly families or groups are easily made out. The term would apply to particular families, or to tribes or even to

nations, Jews and Gentiles. The general meaning of Paul, however, is clear. He states that God's Fatherhood is the supreme ideal and ground of all other forms of the paternal relation, in every collection or group of intelligent beings in which it exists.

"The riches of his glory." This phrase is in a high degree appropriate in a prayer which is so comprehensive. He desires for his readers the greatest fullness of love and of knowledge and the measure of God's bestowment of these is not any one quality in God, but the infinite wealth of glory, the entire fullness of spiritual riches in God. "Strengthened with power." In i: 17, 18 he desired that the eyes of their hearts might be enlightened. Here he prays that they may be endowed with power. The Holy Spirit is the agent of this power and his work is "in the inward man." This indicates the spiritual quality of the power. The inward man is our total inner nature: the intellect, emotions and will. Increasingly as the New Testament life develops we find the stress placed not upon miracles or mighty works in the outward sense. The power of God is slowly concentrated in the inner life of believers for moral strengthening and for growth in knowledge. The inner man of the sinner is the fleshly and carnal mind, and in the regenerate man it still requires strengthening and enlightening.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." This is simply a further explanation of the preceding petition "that ye may be strengthened," etc. The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer is to reproduce therein the image of Christ. The work of the Spirit is to bring together the Redeemer and the redeemed. Faith is the connecting link on the side of the redeemed. The Spirit presents Christ to the believer's faith and the union takes place. The heart here means the totality of the inner or spiritual nature of man. It is practically equivalent to the "inward man" above. Christ had already promised that he would come and make his abode in believers (compare i: 19, 21; ii: 9 and John xiv: 16-20; Gal. ii: 20; Phil. i: 21). The dwelling of Christ in the heart through faith, then, is to be strengthened with power by his Spirit.

"To the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love." That is, having been rooted and grounded, etc. The double metaphor of tree and building simply strengthens the idea of stability. Having been rooted means having struck the roots down deeply, and having

ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.

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been grounded means having been solidly foundationed. "In love" means that love is the soil into which the roots are struck or the foundation laid.

"What is the breadth and length and height and depth." This expression sets forth very strongly Paul's sense of the greatness of the object of knowledge. The question arises, to what does he refer? Some have said the reference is to the mystery mentioned in the earlier parts of the epistle. This is possible. Yet others claim that the reference is to the spiritual temple which is in process of construction. But there is no conclusive evidence of this meaning. Perhaps the most natural interpretation makes the words refer to the "love of Christ" in the next clause. "The love of Christ" seems to be added as explanatory of the preceding words, and certainly this yields a meaning entirely in harmony with the general connection here and Paul's teachings elsewhere.

"To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." "To apprehend" in the preceding statement means to grasp the knowledge of a fact, and carries no thought of exhaustive knowledge. Here, as if to avoid a wrong impression as to the possibilities of our knowledge, Paul discriminates between partial and complete knowledge We may know the love of Christ, but it transcends and exceeds our knowledge. We may rise to some general conception of its dimensions, its breadth, and length, and depth, and height, but after all, we can know it only partially. There will always remain unexplored depths.

"That ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." Knowledge has a spiritual end. We are to know in order to be. The "fulness of God" means our nature possessed completely by the energy of God and transformed completely into the likeness of Christ. Our capacity for the reception of spiritual life is thought of as if it were exhausted through God's complete possession of us.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above
all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,
21 unto him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto [1]all
generations for ever and ever. Amen.

4 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worth-
ily of the calling wherewith ye were called, 2 with all lowliness and

[1]Gr. all the generations of the age of the ages.

Verses 20 and 21 are a doxology which most fitly follows the lofty prayer he has just uttered. He has been asking for spiritual benefits of the most transcendent and superlative kind. Naturally these would seem to be beyond the reach of men. As if to reassure them Paul breaks forth into this ascription of praise to God who is not only able to answer the prayer he has offered but "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Moreover we have a sample of his boundless resources in the "power that worketh in us." Finally "unto him *be* the glory in the church," about which he has been speaking, and "in Christ Jesus," who is its bond of unity, "unto all generations for ever and ever." Literally the last clause is "unto all the generations of the age of the ages." It means all the eternity of the future.

Practical Exhortation to Unity. (iv: 1-6.)

Paul now exhorts or rather beseeches his hearers to practical unity in their relations with one another as Christians and names the great sources of unity: the one body, the church, the one Holy Spirit which animates it, the one hope, the one Lord, Jesus Christ; the one faith; the one baptism in which the faith is proclaimed; the one God and Father of all. It will be noted how uniformly and consistently Paul adheres to his fundamental idea, the summing up and unity of all things in Christ. Among Christians one of the most essential expressions of this idea is their unity of faith and life.

"The prisoner in the Lord" is another recognition of Christ's hand in his imprisonment. Paul refers to it again not in order to call forth sympathy but as giving force to his entreaty. In strongly urging or beseeching them to walk worthily of their calling he names some of the virtues this will require. "With all lowliness and meekness." The word "lowliness" here means to have a modest opinion of oneself. It does not necessarily mean that one has a false view of him-

meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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self, thinking himself smaller than he really is, but it does carry with it the idea of willingness to be treated as smaller than one really is without complaint. The demand for "recognition" is absent. "Meekness" means the absence of the spirit of resentment or revenge, willingness to endure wrong or suffering without retaliating. "With longsuffering" scarcely requires explanation. Patient endurance is what the word signifies. "Forbearing one another in love" is a kindred expression with a slight shade of difference in meaning. Longsuffering might be merely passive, a sort of stoical resignation. But "forbearing one another in love" brings out the active side of the endurance. There is recognition of the worth of others, the value of unity as compared with individual selfish gratification, and in particular the presence of love which sees the worth of others and appreciates it.

"Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This is the climax of the preceding exhortation. They were not only to practice longsuffering, meekness, and forbearance, in a lowly estimate of self, in order to avoid schism and strife. They were also to become zealous in the pursuit of unity. "Giving diligence" means earnestly seeking the unity. "To keep" suggests that they already possessed it and were to preserve it. It is the unity of the Holy Spirit, that is produced by his indwelling in the church.

And now by a sudden turn of expression in *verse 4* Paul gives a profound and beautiful summary of all the causes and sources of the unity which he is entreating his readers to practice. The American version reads: "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, etc." But "there is" has no corresponding words in the Greek. The writer abruptly says after the words "bond of peace:" "one body, and one Spirit, etc." Paul here enumerates no less than seven sources of Christian unity. 1. "One body," that is the church. The figure of the body to represent the church occurs frequently in Ephesians and Colossians. 2. "One Spirit" means one Holy Spirit. This one Spirit animates the one body. It would be most unnatural to understand the words otherwise, as referring, say, to the disposition or mood of the church. 3. "One hope of your calling." The Chris-

4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. 7 But

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tian hope is one in its ground and its object and the means for its realization. 4. "One Lord," that is, Jesus Christ whom we all obey. Our individual and collective life as Christians is subject at all points and in all things to the will of Christ. 5. "One faith." We are joined to the common Lord by the same principle of faith. 6. "One baptism." All were admitted into the outward fellowship of Christians by the one act of baptism which in a symbolic way declared their faith and by the submergence of their bodies in water and the emergence therefrom set forth pictorially the meaning of their spiritual resurrection in and through Jesus Christ. 7. "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." God is over all men and all things as sovereign. He is through all or among them as a pervading presence to guide and control. He is in all to illumine and sustain and fill up our nature with his own divine fullness. Observe the climax in the arrangement of Paul's thought, first the church or one body, second the one Lord whom the church obeys, third, one God over all. So also the Spirit is mentioned first, the Son second and the Father last. This passage is a striking expression of the entire thought of the epistle which is the summing up of all things in Christ, and in particular the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the spiritual body of Christ.

The Diversity of Gifts in the One Body. (iv: 7-16.)

He now turns to the gifts of Christ to the church. "Unto each one," to each member of the body "was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." What we possess in Christ is to be gauged by what Christ possesses in himself. In John i: 16 we read "For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace." He and his fullness are the archetypes, or ideal and complete expression of the graces and gifts which are imparted to us. In him is a fullness and variety answering all our individual needs and equal to the requirements of our collective needs as his body.

"Wherefore he saith," referring to an Old Testament writer. Then follows a quotation from Ps. lxviii: 18. The psalm, however, does

unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, [1]When he ascended on high he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men.

[1]Ps. lxviii.18.

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not read precisely as in Paul's quotation. There it reads "thou hast received gifts among men" which is in contrast with Paul's words here "and gave gifts unto men." Various attempts have been made to account for the variation in Paul's language from that of the psalm The true view seems to be either that Paul quoted the psalm in a form which was probably current among the Jews of his day, or else in order to bring out the particular point in his mind he purposely varied the language from that of the psalmist. The Chaldee Targum gives the quotation as Paul gives it here and although of late date it may reproduce the form of the quotation current in Paul's day. However, it would have been quite in accord with Paul's use of Old Testament sayings to deviate from the literal quotation. In the psalm God is the victor who ascends on high, here it is Christ. In Acts ii: 33 Christ's bestowment of the gift of the Holy Spirit is mentioned. It would be most natural to cite this passage of the psalm not as indicating the fulfillment of a particular prediction but as presenting a suggestive parallel. The variation of language would be incidental to the main point.

"He led captivity captive." The verb and the noun are from the same root. Captivity puts the abstract for the concrete. It is "captivity" in the sense of a "band of captives," like "purchase" for "purchases" (see i: 14). Christ after his descent came off victor over all enemies. He ascended on high as conqueror. But his ascent implied first a descent into the "lower parts of the earth." This may mean the earth as lower than the heavens, or the lower parts of the earth itself. The latter meaning is probably the correct one, the reference being to Christ's descent into Hades or the realm of death and then rising in triumph from the power of death and all the forces of darkness. In Col. ii:15 he makes "a show of them openly," meaning the principalities and powers. His death and resurrection were his supreme conquest of Satan and his hosts.

"Far above all the heavens." There is emphasis upon the heights to which he ascended. His throne is above all created things and

9 (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended [1]into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some *to be* apostles; and some, prophets;

[1]Some ancient authorities insert, first.

beings. "That he might fill all things." If we follow the immediate connection of these words this might be taken as referring to the spiritual gifts bestowed upon the church. But in the light of the general teaching of the epistle there is probably no such limitation in Paul's mind. The summing up or unifying of creation in Christ carries with it the corresponding truth that all the parts partake of his fullness.

Now follows an enumeration of the gifts of Christ for the growth and development of the body. "he gave some to be apostles." This, no doubt, refers to the twelve apostles, Paul himself being included. The qualifications of an apostle were that he had seen the Lord, that he was inspired and had power to declare the will of God as revealed in the gospel, and that he could work miracles. There are and can be no successors to the apostles. "And some, prophets." The prophets of the New Testament were inspired men who belonged to a special class and who performed a special work. The apostles and prophets were a part of the foundation, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. "And some, evangelists." The evangelist preached the gospel to the unconverted. "And some, pastors and teachers." Pastors and teachers are coupled together since they were the same officer. The pastor tended the flock and looked after the wandering and a part of his duty was to teach. These may all be regarded as functions rather than distinct offices, although there were also offices corresponding to each. The apostle combined nearly all of the functions in his activities. The pastor was also sometimes evangelist, although the evangelist was not necessarily pastor (see John xxi:15-17; 2 Tim. iv:6; 1 Cor.iii: 2; Acts xiv 22-23; 1 Cor.xiv:1-5; Acts xi:27; xxi: 10). It will be observed how complete is the provision made by the Lord for the establishment and care of his churches Apostles were the authoritative witnesses to Christ and founders of his churches. Prophets were the inspired teachers and revealers of the will of Christ as the churches grew and there arose necessity for additional knowledge. Evangelists carried the good news of the gos-

and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: 13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man,

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pel into the regions beyond. Pastors and teachers continued the work of instruction and guidance for the churches already established.

The apostle now proceeds to describe in remarkable completeness and detail the end to be accomplished by all these gifts of Christ to his church. "For the perfecting of the saints." The word for perfecting here means "to mend," "to complete," "to fit out," "to make one what he ought to be." The phrase may be taken then to signify "the complete fitting out of the saints," or the bringing of them to the divine standard. "Unto the work of ministering." Ministering here means serving. All the arrangement is for service in the church. "Unto the building up of the body of Christ." The natural expression here would have been "the growth of the body of Christ," since the body is not an edifice but an organism. The expressions "edify" and "build up" are favorite ones with Paul and although there is, as we say in rhetoric, a mixing of figures, the meaning is very distinct and clear. The three forms of statement in *verse 12* all mean nearly the same thing yet each adds something to the general meaning. "For the perfecting of the saints" holds before us the ideal moral perfection which was designed for each and all the saints in the whole arrangement. "Unto the work of ministering" suggests that nothing in the arrangement is superfluous or needless. Every one of the gifts named is a necessary part of the equipment. "Unto the building up of the body of Christ" completes the thought by binding the whole process to Christ, who is the head. The vital union with him is the source of all the life and power of the organism itself.

Verse 13 specifies more particularly the perfection mentioned in *verse 12*. "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith." This means a unity of life connection with Christ, until we are all equally joined to him completely, so that there is no interruption of the flow of his life into us. Paul can scarcely be referring mainly to the "unity of the faith" in the creedal sense. This may be indirectly involved, and it would naturally follow the other kind of unity. The connection, however, deals chiefly rather with the life-union between

unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the

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the believer and the Savior and thus union with each other and not with external bonds or forms of union. "And of the knowledge of the Son of God." Knowledge, as we have seen repeatedly, is an object of Christian attainment much emphasized in this epistle. Knowledge of the "mystery" of God's eternal plan and purpose, and of various other things, has received emphasis hitherto. "The Son of God" refers to the exalted and glorified Christ. The earthly Jesus is never thought of by Paul apart from his risen and glorified life. The knowledge of the Son of God then would not require merely the study of the history of the public ministry of Jesus. It would require also spiritual insight into the meaning of his redemptive work and his present reign, the principles and ends of his kingdom.

"Unto a fullgrown man." This means a man of full maturity, a complete man. "Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The word for "stature" might be translated "age" but here probably it is correctly rendered stature. The expression means that each is to possess the fullness of Christ to the limit of his capacity, and thus attain the maturity and completeness of a fully developed manhood. The "fulness of Christ" is Christ's fullness imparted to the believer through the life union of faith and through growth in knowledge as indicated in the preceding verse. The successive clauses here are closely dependent upon each other. Each clause carries further some phase of that which preceded it. The entire passage should be read without reference to the division into verses.

"That we may be no longer children." He now turns from the thought of the mature man to the contrasted thought of spiritual immaturity represented by childhood. The writers and speakers of the New Testament deal with childhood from various points of view as the occasion required. Jesus said "for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xix: 14) referring to the teachableness and docility of children. In 1 Cor. xiv: 20 Paul exhorts his readers to be children in malice but not in understanding. His exhortation here is in keeping with various other passages wherein childhood represents spiritual immaturity (see 1 Cor. iii: 1; xiii: 11; Gal. iv:1-3;

wiles of error; 15 but [1]speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, *even* Christ; 16 from whom all the

[1]Or, dealing truly.

Heb. v: 13). The phase of childhood here especially to be avoided is instability. "Tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." The figure is that of a wave or ship tossed hither and thither by the wind. "Doctrine" means, as usual in the New Testament, teaching. Any kind of false teaching which might lead them astray is meant in the language here. Now follows a description of the sources of the "winds of doctrine." "By the sleight of men" means by trickery. The Greek word means dice-playing. "In craftiness" means "with shrewdness," or careful planning. "After the wiles of error" means "tending toward the methodical devices of error." The description applies to crafty men who in a methodical way seek to deceive others.

"But speaking truth in love." This brings back the contrast from the Christian side. "Speaking truth in love" is literally rendered "dealing truly" or "cherishing truth in love." The former of these "dealing" or "doing" truly is probably the correct meaning. Speaking truth is one detail of dealing truly. But Paul here employs a word whose correct rendering seems to require more than merely speaking. Knowing the truth and doing it, embodying it in conduct, is a favorite New Testament mode of regarding truth.

"May grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ." The figure of the body of which Christ is the head here returns. Our growth is all related to him, since he is the head of which we are the body. This passage not only contains the idea of each believer growing up into Christ as a member of his body, but also that of the entire body as slowly becoming mature and full-grown.

"From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together." Descending from the head to the body, the former is assigned its proper place of control and source of supply for the body. "Fitly framed and knit together" carries with it the idea of parts brought together for purposes of union and then of the accurate fitting of parts to each other. "Through that which every joint supplieth." This is variously rendered "through every joint of the supply" (King James Revision); or "through every contact with the supply." The lat-

body fitly framed and knit together [1]through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in *due* measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of

[1]Gr. through every joint of the supply.

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ter is probably the correct meaning. Every contact with the supply then would mean every contact with the head, as the source of supply, or every contact with the means which connect with the source of supply, that is, the various ministries previously referred to.

"According to the working in due measure of each several part." According to the active energy of each part. The parts perform their functions properly and thus the whole makes progress toward perfection. "Maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." Love is the element in which the whole process is carried on. It is the motive behind all the activity. In Col. ii: 19 there is a passage parallel with the one we have before us in which according to the chief emphasis in Colossians, the Head is presented as the source of supply for all the body, which increases with the increase of God.

Exhortation to Abandon the Gentile Way of Living. (iv: 17-24.)

"Therefore." This connects the thought with *verse 1* where he began his exhortation. "Testify in the Lord" is a manner of solemn declaration. "What I am saying" he means "is spoken by one joined to the Lord and knowing his mind." Then follows a description of the spiritual state of the Gentiles. As usual Paul portrays it vividly and boldly. Contemporary history confirms him in the picture given here. "In the vanity of their mind." Vanity means not false merely, but also empty. This state of mind is due to a darkening of the understanding. "Darkened in their understanding" describes both a moral and a mental condition. The darkness covers the entire nature. "Alienated from the life of God." Alienated is the same word as that employed in ii: 12. "The life of God." This

their heart; 19 who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, [1]to work all uncleanness with [2]greediness. 20 But ye

[1]Or, to make a trade of. [2]Or, covetousness. Comp. ch. 5.3; Col. 3.5.

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does not mean the life which God bestows merely, or the life of which God is the source. It means more than either or both these, viz., the life which God lives. Believers are here thought of as sharing God's own life with him. "Because of the ignorance that is in them." The truth is God's means of bringing us into his own life. Ignorance of the truth cuts us off from the life of God. This ignorance again is due to their own callous hearts. "Because of the hardening of their heart." Hardening here means to lose the power of feeling. The verb from which the noun comes is "to cover with a thick skin" so that the capacity to feel is taken away. Perhaps we may trace in this description of the condition of the Gentiles the course of sin step by step. Paul begins at the end or outcome and traces it back to its root. Vanity of mind was the finished product of the evil working in them, and was the rule of their life. This vanity or emptiness of mind resulted from a darkened understanding. The first result of the ignorance in them was alienation from the life of God. Finally all is traced to the hardening of their heart. Primarily the cause is moral and spiritual, their attitude of unbelief and disobedience.

Now follows a further and more detailed account of the Gentile way of life. "Being past feeling" continues the idea of hardening in the preceding clause. They "gave themselves up," dedicated themselves as it were, to lasciviousness, to sins of impurity. "To work all uncleanness with greediness," is given in alternate form as a marginal reading in both the Canterbury and American revisions as "to make a trade of" "with covetousness." That is to make a trade of uncleanness with covetousness. This would be an exact description of what in modern civilization is known as the "white slave" traffic. Probably covetousness here, however, means greediness, or inordinate desire.

"But ye did not so learn Christ." "Christ" is used here in discrimination from Jesus below. "Christ" means Messiah and Redeemer. To learn Christ rather than things about Christ is quite in harmony with a prevailing New Testament usage. Christianity

did not so learn Christ; 21 if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: 22 that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; 23 and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new man, [1]that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

[1]Or, that is after God, created, etc.

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is a personal union of the believer with Christ. In hearing the gospel, therefore, a man hears Christ and in believing he is joined to Christ. "If so be that ye heard him and were taught in him." As has been said this does not imply real but only rhetorical doubt. It is put in the form of a doubt to make the assertion stronger and is equivalent to "since ye have heard him, etc." "And were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus." Jesus was the personal and historical name of Christ. It was through knowledge of him that God's redemptive truth had first reached these Gentiles.

Verses 22 to 24 present a beautiful and striking contrast between the old sinful Gentile way of life and that of the regenerate man in Christ. Paul continues the appeal to his readers to forsake the old way as the necessary outcome of having learned Christ. The figure employed is that of the old as contrasted with the new man. The old man is to be put off and the new is to be put on as garments are put off and on. "That ye put away" once for all the old man. This old man was a part of your old heathen way of living. "That waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit." The word here translated corrupt means rather falling into decay, that which is in process of disintegration or destruction. The old man has in it the seeds of decay. Its law of action is determined by the vanity and ignorance previously mentioned, and the desires which control it are deceitful in their results.

"And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind." This is taken by some to refer to the Holy Spirit in the mind by whose action we are to be renewed. But the Holy Spirit is not called "the spirit of our mind." The expression means rather the dominant impulse or most inward tendency of our mind. The renewing is described as a continuing process. Be ye daily or constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind. The word translated "be renewed" is from a root which means "become youthful" so that the contrast with the

25 Wherefore, putting away falsehood, [1]speak ye truth each one

[1]Zech. viii. 16.

"old man" is made complete. "And put on the new man." The word "new" here is not from the same root as "renewed" above, although of course it continues the figure. The new man means the new nature given to us in regeneration. It has been taken by some to refer to Christ, "the new Adam." But this seems scarcely to be the meaning here. The change which takes place in the believer is a new creation in Christ. The new man is he "that after God," according to God's power, "hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." There is a contrast intended between "the lusts of deceit" in *verse 22* and "righteousness and holiness of truth" here. These terms of the contrast correspond to the old man and the new man. Righteousness means righteous conduct in one's dealings with men. Holiness is the sum of moral perfection as it exists in God.

Teaching against Sins Which are a Breach of Unity (iv: 25-v: 14)

In the next paragraph Paul applies the law of unity in Christ in several directions. The sins against which he warns his readers are those found in the second table of the Ten Commandments. Here the morality of the law is given a new and higher sanction. Christianity does not abolish the moral law. On the contrary it deepens and broadens it. Moral obligation is not less but greater under the Christian sanctions. But the nature of man, having been regenerated by the Spirit of God, conforms in its inner and deeper impulses to the requirements of the law. Throughout this section the thought of unity in Christ is present.

The first command is to put away falsehood. "Putting away falsehood" (see Zech. viii: 16) means not merely lying but all forms of falsehood. Whatever is false in character is to be put away. "His neighbor" no doubt includes all men with whom we have dealings, whether Christian or not, although the enforcement of the precept here is by means of a Christian relationship. "We are members one of another." This conforms to the figure so common in the epistle, the church as the body of Christ. Each believer is a member of Christ's body. Lying or falsehood in the wider sense, therefore, is as absurd as for one member of the human body to attempt to de-

with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. 26 [1]Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your [2]wrath: 27 neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.

[1]Ps. iv. 4. [2]Gr. provocation.

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ceive another. And as we are members of the same body, if we injure another by ignoring this unity, we thereby injure ourselves.

Verses 26 and 27 exhort to self control against sinful anger. "Be ye angry, and sin not" is not a command to be angry (see Ps. iv: 4, 5). Being angry is preliminary to the words "sin not." If ye are angry, or when ye are angry, "sin not." Anger in the form of indignation against evil is not only not wrong in itself, it is fitting and called for under certain circumstances. But it is a dangerous state of mind and needs to be carefully guarded. It tends to become not merely righteous resentment but exasperation. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." The margin translates wrath as "provocation." Let your anger be brief and keep it under control. Let it not become a fixed or permanent mood or attitude. *Verse 27* continues: "Neither give place to the devil." The devil is a calumniator or stirrer-up of strife. The word means literally "one who throws across." The root idea is of throwing accusations across to another and arousing enmity and strife. Uncontrolled anger would be letting the devil have control and he would destroy the unity that is in Christ.

Verse 28 sets forth honesty from the peculiar and particular point of view of this epistle. All dishonesty violates unity, ignores the relationship between us and other members of the body. Honest work is set over against stealing as the proper occupation of the Christian. The aim of work, moreover, is not merely accumulation or hoarding of wealth, but "that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." We are not to understand by this that the Christian is required to give away all he earns. But the words do lay upon us the obligation to hold wealth chiefly for the service we may render, the good we may accomplish by means of it. The Christian ideal then is not robbery, or stealing what belongs to another, but giving to the needs of others.

29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for [1]edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. 30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you,

[1]Gr. the building up of the need.

"Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth." Corrupt means decayed or rotten, meaning of course that which is morally offensive and unsound. The marginal rendering of the words which follow is more literal and exact. "But such as is good for the building up of the need." Our words are to be used like our gains financially for building up the moral and spiritual life of others. "The building up of the need" suggests timeliness and appropriateness in our words. Each occasion or situation calls for its own instruction. The words should be pertinent to the occasion and match the need of the hearer. Thus we shall edify or build him up. "That it may give grace to them that hear" simply continues the thought of building up. To give grace is to impart grace or blessing to the hearer by means of our words, which when fitly spoken are used of God to this end.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." In sinning in any of the above ways we grieve the Spirit of God. There is one body and one Spirit (iv: 4) and if by falsehood, or unholy anger, or dishonesty, or corrupt and unedifying speech, we produce schism in the body, so that one member wars against another we thereby grieve the Holy Spirit who is the informing and unifying principle of the body. "In whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." The sealing by the Spirit has already been referred to in connection with i: 13, where it is declared they were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Here the sealing is unto the day of redemption, that is with a view to the final deliverance from all the sins mentioned and to a state of complete conformity to the will and image of Christ.

Verse 31 enumerates another group of sins which also are opposed to the ideal unity of the body of Christ. They are commanded to put away "bitterness" which means a resentful disposition and inward hardness of spirit toward others; "wrath" which means the excited state which follows the undue indulgence of the bitter feeling; "an-

with all malice: 32 and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave [1]you.
5 Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for [2]us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell.

[1]Many ancient authorities read, us. [2]Some ancient authorities read, you.

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ger," or the more settled attitude which often remains after the outbreak of wrath; "clamor," or the loud outburst of anger; "railing," which means reviling, the deliberate utterance of hurtful things against another which may succeed the clamor. All these are to be put away. Finally he enumerates malice along with the preceding which must also be put away. Malice is a state of mind closely resembling the bitterness or resentment mentioned first, but is rather more deeply seated. Malice is a sin which results from an inherently evil disposition, while bitterness or resentment is the result of some occasion which excites it. The best definition of malice is to consider it as opposed in all respects to the graces which are enumerated in the next verse.

He next exhorts to kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness, based on what God has done for them in Christ. "Be ye kind one to another," etc. Kindness refers rather to the outward bearing and conduct toward others, while tender-heartedness describes more particularly the inward feelings which prompt the kindly actions. "Forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." The model and standard, as well as the motive, of our forgiveness of each other, is God's forgiveness of us in Christ. God in Christ approaches men and his forgiveness is communicated to us thus. The phrase here corresponds to its use in other connections in the epistle where our spiritual blessings come to us "in Christ." As being "in Christ" we are the objects of God's boundless love. Here it is God who "in Christ" forgives us. Christ is the bond of union between God and man. In and through him God comes to us, and being in him we inherit all the fullness of God's grace.

Verses 1 and 2 in chapter v are among the most striking and beautiful in all the New Testament. Briefly summed up they include the following: first we are to imitate God as beloved children. We may imitate God because we are His children, partaking of his nature. The word translated children is that which means begotten of God.

"Beloved children" suggests the source of our desire to imitate God. The affectionate parent inspires affection. Being beloved of God, as his children we yearn to please him. Second, the particular point of the exhortation to imitate God is that we "walk in love." Our whole life and all the details of our conduct are to be the outward expression of the love which fills us as God's children. Love is the comprehensive virtue. So that if we walk in love we do imitate God. The degree in which this love must manifest itself in order to be a true imitation of God is suggested by the last verse of chapter iv, viz., the forgiveness of those who offend against us. In Matt. v: 45, 48, we have the same teaching from Jesus. We are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, and the perfection of the heavenly Father appears in his abundant gifts to the evil and the good. We, in like manner, are to exercise a love which is of the same quality with that of the Father whom we imitate. Third, the measure and standard of the love is set forth still further as that of Christ in giving himself up for us as a sacrifice to God. The expression "offering and sacrifice to God" seems to be a quotation from Ps. xl: 6. It appears also in Heb. x: 5. We may distinguish between the two, "offering" being understood as any kind of offering to God, while "sacrifice" refers to bloody offerings, where a victim is slain. The two words combined are a comprehensive description of offerings of all kinds, and indicate the completeness of Christ's sacrifice for us. Paul's emphasis is upon the completeness of Christ's sacrifice. But he meant to include also the idea of the sacrifice which was bloody, including the death on the cross.

"For an odor of a sweet smell," corresponds to an Old Testament usage (Gen. viii: 21; Ex. xxix: 18). Among heathen worshippers the idea prevailed that the god actually smelled the burnt offering as it was consumed on the altar. Among the Jews it meant that which was pleasing or acceptable to God (compare Phil. iv: 18).

Dr. Abbott in his commentary on Ephesians says in connection with the injunction to forgive each other in iv: 32 and to imitate God in v: 1: "That this is here placed on the ground of God's forgiveness is a decisive proof that St. Paul did not view the atonement in the light of payment of a debt or endurance of a penalty demanded by divine justice." In reply it may be said that in this particular passage it is true that the expiatory aspect of Christ's death for our sins

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; 4 nor filthiness,

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does not appear. But it is a conclusion based on a narrow range of texts from Paul to assert that he taught no such doctrine. Paul's view of the atonement must be gathered from passages where he is discussing the point in question, and not merely from passages where he is exhorting to some practical duty based on a general truth as in the text before us. In Romans and Galatians, as well as elsewhere we find his views as to the relation of the death of Christ to the sins of men. Surely the exegete must take account of these also if he is to form a just conclusion as to Paul's teaching as a whole (compare Romans i: 18–v: 21, especially iii: 23-26 and Gal. iii: 9-14).

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness," etc. Fornication means illicit sexual intercourse in general rather than particular forms of it. The word covetousness here seems out of place, if taken in the ordinary sense of greed for money. The passage before us deals exclusively with sins of impurity (v: 3-14). In iv: 19 the word here translated covetousness appears. It meant originally to take advantage of another, or unfair advantage. From this it came to mean desire for the advantage and this would easily become intemperate or inordinate desire. Covetousness in the sense of greed for money is certainly one meaning of the word (Luke xii: 15; 2 Cor. ix: 5) But in other passages it has a different meaning, although there is some variation in the precise form of the word (1 Cor. v: 10, 11; Col. iii: 5; 2 Pet. ii: 14; 1 Thess. iv: 6). The word is sometimes closely connected with sins of the flesh, or sensuality, as distinguished from covetousness or greed for money. In the passage before us it probably means inordinate desire in general, but with reference primarily to sins of the flesh. This would seem to appear from the words which immediately follow: "let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints." Paul himself mentions covetousness in the ordinary meaning of the word in 2 Cor. ix: 5. This word which is not even to be named among saints, then, would seem to be inordinate desire, or lust.

"Nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting." "Filthiness" probably means filthy conduct. It is a general word and fitly ex-

nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the

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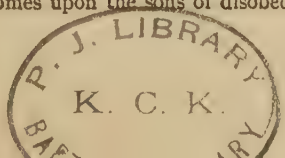
presses the outcome of the preceding "covetousness" or inordinate desire. "Foolish talking" usually accompanies an otherwise filthy life. It is foolish not merely as senseless but as morally bad. "Jesting" is here connected with uncleanness of life and speech, and refers to the unclean levity of speech which is the natural expression of a licentious life. Jesting of this kind is one of the forms in which the conscience is stilled and the law of righteousness set aside. Heathen converts to Christianity were especially tempted to this kind of sin because of the lax morals of the life from which they came. "Which are not befitting" means out of keeping with the Christian calling. "But rather giving of thanks" sets forth the virtue on the spiritual side which opposes the ribald and unclean jesting. Not levity of spirit but lightness of heart due to the goodness of God, expressing itself in suitable words of thankfulness to God.

Verse 5 declares that no fornicator or unclean person nor covetous person, "who is an idolater" has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Idolatry is in its real essence, fixing the heart upon the creature rather than the Creator. Inordinate sensual desire as well as greed for gold is such as fixing of the affections on the creature. "The kingdom of Christ and God" might seem to suggest that Paul identifies Christ with God meaning "Christ who is God." The Greek would admit this rendering since there is no article with the word translated God. But the word for God is a proper name for God the Father without the article and Paul here probably means to assert simply that it is the kingdom of Christ and of God, rather than of "Christ who is God."

Verse 6 cautions the readers against being led astray by "empty words." To whom reference is made we do not know, whether heathen teachers or misguided Christians, or whether to encouragements to immoral living or to the acceptance of deceptive errors. Possibly both classes of teachers and false teaching are in the apostle's mind. The wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience because of these things.



wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them; 8 for ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord; 11 and have no fellowship with the un-

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Verse 7 is exhortation to Christians to a complete breach of fellowship with the wicked world around them. This is based on the contrast between the light which has come to them and the darkness which reigns in the unbelieving. From *verse 8* to the end of the paragraph, *verse 14*, the contrast between the light and the darkness is drawn out. "Be not ye therefore partakers with them" in *verse 7*, is followed by various incentives to a separate life growing out of the opposition between light and darkness. First the Christians were once darkness but are now light "in the Lord." Observe that he does not say ye were once "in darkness" and are now "in the light." He says "ye were once darkness" and are now "light." Darkness was in them as well as around them and now light is in them as well as falling upon them. Their identification with darkness and light was so complete that it was proper to describe their states as darkness and light

"Walk as children of light." This is followed by a description of the fruit of the light as being "in all goodness," or practical benevolence, good-will, or love in action; "and righteousness and truth," or conforming to the law of God, true to the standard of holiness. "The fruit of the light" is a suggestive phrase. Light is the source of fruit in the sense that all vegetation is dependent upon light. We cannot say that Paul meant the figure to be so understood here. Darkness is unfruitful and light is fruitful. As light produces every kind of "goodness, righteousness and truth," so darkness produces every kind of evil, and unrighteousness and falsehood.

"Proving what is well pleasing unto the Lord." This proof of what is well pleasing unto the Lord would arise through their own experience and become a proof to themselves through their fellowship with God, and it would also indirectly become a proof to others of the life approved of God. (For the use of the figure of light and darkness see 1 John i: 6, 7; ii: 9, 10; John i: 4-9; iii: 19; Matt. v: 6; James i: 17; 1 Thess. v: 5).

fruitful works of darkness, but rather even [1]reprove them; 12 for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of. 13 But all things when they are [2]reproved are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light. 14 Wherefore *he* saith, [3]Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

[1]Or, convict. [2]Or, convicted. [3](?). Comp. 1 Tim: iii. 16.

In *verse 11* the exhortation is that they "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them." The word "reprove" is the same as in John iii: 20 where men refuse to come to the light lest their works be reproved; and the same word is used in John xvi: 8, where the Spirit is said to convict the world of sin. To reprove thus means to convince in the sense of make clear or bring to light, and in the moral sense of convicting of sin, producing a consciousness of guilt or showing guilt by uncovering it. To reprove here means this moral conviction by an uncovering of evil and making manifest its true nature. The true attitude of the Christian toward evil is not simply withdrawal from it or breaking fellowship with it. It includes also that we take a positive stand against it or reprove it.

Verses 12 and 13 teach that the influence of Christian life and truth is to uncover and by uncovering tc reprove the wicked deeds of men. It is a shame to speak of some of their sins. But this is unnecessary. If the light of truth shines upon them the sins are uncovered and rebuked. The light itself is the best reproof and rebuke of darkness. There is considerable difference of opinion among commentators as to the correct translation of some of the expressions in these two verses especially the words: "for everything that is made manifest is light." Another translation of the words is: "whatever makes manifest is light." There is no difficulty as to the general meaning viz. that the light of Christian influence and truth uncovers and makes manifest the nature of evil.

Verse 14 seems to be a quotation from Scripture, if we judge by the way in which it is introduced. "Wherefore *he* saith." The word he, it will be noted, is italicized indicating that it is not in the Greek. The statement is not that God saith, or the Spirit saith, or even that the Scripture saith. 'It may be read "it saith" or "he saith." Against the idea that this is a quotation from the Old Testament is

15 Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as

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the fact that there is no such passage in the Old Testament. The passage in Is. lx: 1 can scarcely be intended. Some commentators think Paul's memory failed him here and that he thought he was quoting from the Old Testament when he was not. But others have met this successfully by pointing out that Paul could scarcely have been betrayed, even by a lapse of memory, into reading the name "Christ" into an Old Testament passage. Paul knew that the Old Testament taught that the Messiah was to come but he also knew that nowhere is he called as in the New Testament "the Christ." The more probable view is that Paul is here quoting some saying current among Christians. It sounds like a quotation from a hymn. The sleeper is exhorted to awake and arise from the dead "and Christ shall shine upon thee." This is a fitting evangelistic turn to give to the previous description of the sinful and darkened world. Those who are in the darkness may through Christ's regenerating grace come forth into the light, by a spiritual rising from the dead. The expression "and Christ shall shine upon thee" might be rendered "and Christ shall dawn upon thee."

Exhortation to a Careful Walk and to Avoid Drunkenness. (v: 15-21.)

In *verse 15* Paul returns to his exhortation to Christians. He has been describing sins of impurity among the heathen. "Look therefore carefully how ye walk" means "see to it that you lead a definitely ordered and morally strict life." To look carefully in this connection does not mean to look around, but to consider carefully the walk itself. The Christian's life is not a purposeless drift on the tides of surrounding influences. It is a definitely chosen course directed toward a fixed destination, and it requires a steady hand upon the helm, a firm will and purpose to avoid losing the way. "Not as unwise but as wise." True wisdom is after all a moral quality. To be wise is not to know books or be possessed of intellectual brilliancy, but rather to know and observe the moral and spiritual laws which underlie all conduct and all character. Wisdom is seen chiefly in the careful walk, the pursuit, with perseverance and tenacity of purpose, of the moral and Christian ideal.

wise; 16 [1]redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

[1]Gr. buying up the opportunity.

"Redeeming the time." The participle is formed on a root which means market. "Time" here is properly opportunity. Grasp the opportunity, as you would quickly seize an opportunity to buy or sell. In Col. iv: 5 the same expression is found, but there the apostle emphasizes a careful walk toward those who are without. "Because the days are evil." You live in a world which at all points opposes your advance. At best it is a difficult undertaking in which you are engaged as Christians. Like a good buyer and seller in a busy market therefore you must not let your opportunities slip through your fingers. Alert watchfulness, a constant being on guard, an unceasing readiness to act at the proper moment, are the conditions which must be met if you are to fulfill your Christian calling.

In *verse 17* the word for foolish is not the same as that for unwise in *verse 15*. Foolish here means senseless or stupid especially in conduct. "But understand what the will of the Lord is" is an added definition of wisdom which is opposed to the senselessness or folly against which he warns them (See Prov. ix: 10).

"And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit." Two kinds of excitement are contrasted, the one low and carnal, the other high and spiritual. Drunkenness leads to riot, and excesses of various kinds; spiritual quickening leads to the singing of hymns, etc. The expression "be filled with the Spirit" has given occasion for difference of opinion among commentators. The alternate reading in the margin is "in spirit." This is a literal rendering of the Greek and means in your spirit. Let not your body but the higher part of your nature be filled. This would imply the action of the Holy Spirit. But the phrase may quite properly be understood of the Holy Spirit as our translators have rendered it. To be filled with the Spirit means that being filled they would contain the Spirit. To be filled by the Spirit (another possible translation), means that the Spirit was he who filled them. There is no substantial difference in the final outcome of all these renderings. The Holy Spirit is thought of as filling their spirits with divine influences leading to the happy results which he proceeds to indicate.

18 And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled [1]with
the Spirit; 19 speaking [2]one to another in psalms and hymns and spir-
itual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;
20 giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus

[1]Or, in spirit. [2]Or, to yourselves.

They are enjoined to speak to one another or "to yourselves" in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Psalms were familiar from Old Testament usage and they were usually sung with an instrumental accompaniment. The hymn was vocal simply without accompaniment. It was a song of praise to God. Spiritual songs are not so easy to discriminate from the others. The "odes" or "songs" were originally any kind of a song, but seem to have referred chiefly to lyric poetry. In the New Testament church it was a song to God or Christ, and it may have been in the form of a solo sung by an individual. In 1 Cor. xiv: 26 Paul refers to the singing of a song by an individual in the church, although the word there used is that translated "psalm" in the passage we are now considering. "singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." The apostle thus keeps the inner and spiritual meaning of worship before them, while enjoining the outward expression of it. They are to sing inwardly to God as well as outwardly with their lips.

The mood of all worship is that of thanksgiving. In *verse 20* Paul defines Christian thanksgiving. It is to God who is also Father. Our thanksgiving to God takes on an especially deep tone because He is Father. It is as comprehensive as life itself and "for all things," since our whole life be under his care and direction. It is in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ since it is through the revelation and mediation of Christ that we come to know God as Father and ourselves as sons. Christ has given us the right (compare John i: 12) to become sons of God in the high and true sense, and our own sonship is constituted in the image of his sonship. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" means giving thanks to God as the disciples of Jesus Christ and recognizing him as the source of the blessings.

"Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." Much labor is expended by commentators to connect this injunction with what precedes. Its connection with what follows is clear enough down to vi: 9. It is difficult to find any strict logical connection of

Christ to [1]God, even the Father; 21 subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.

22 Wives, *be in subjection* unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is

[1]Gr, the God and Father.

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the words with the preceding verses, although they belong grammatically with them. These words simply round out the ideal of the Christian life which the paragraph (*verses 15-21*) sets forth. They fit in well also with the fundamental thought of the epistle, the unity of all things in Christ. Certain forms of subjection are necessary in a well-ordered society. Only thus may the true spiritual unity be realized. In the verse which follows three forms of subjection are enjoined, wives to husbands, children to parents, servants to masters.

The Unity of Family Life (v: 22–vi: 9).

In *verse 22* the words *be in subjection* are not in the Greek text. The translators supplied them from the participle "subjecting" in the preceding verses. If the period is omitted at the end of *verse 21*, *verse 22* might be read as a continuation of *verse 21*: "subjecting yourselves, etc .... wives unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." The expression "as unto the Lord" here of course does not mean that the husband's authority over the wife is identical with that of the Lord, but rather that the performance of this duty of taking her proper attitude to her husband is to be a duty performed "as unto the Lord."

Verse 23 introduces a beautiful analogy between husband and wife on one side and Christ and the church on the other. It is carried through to the end of *verse 33* and is the classic expression in Paul's writings for the ideal of marriage. It is a refutation of those who have held that Paul taught an unworthy and ascetic view as to the marriage relation, based on a passage in Corinthians where he is dealing with a difficult situation in which the marriage tie was often disregarded. His strong blow at sensuality and the abuse of the marriage relation led him to employ terms which were needed for a particular set of circumstances. Here, he treats the marriage relation generally and, so far as we know, apart from local conditions among his readers. It is scarcely possible to conceive of a nobler view of marriage than that which appears here.

the head of the church, *being* himself the saviour of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, [1]so *let* the wives also *be* to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; 26 that he

[1]Or, so are the wives also.

"The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church." The figure of the head and the body runs through this entire paragraph. We have met it several times already in the epistle. It is Paul's favorite figure for the unity of Christ and his church. The same general thought is expressed in 1 Cor. xi: 3, where there are modifications. The head of every man is Christ, and the man is head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.

"Being himself the saviour of the body" is added to show that Christ sustains a relation to the church beyond that of the husband to the wife. Not only is the church his body. He is not only the head of the body but its Saviour as well. No husband can sustain such a relation to his wife.

Verses 24 and 25 sum up comprehensively the lofty ideal on both sides of the marriage relation and may well be balanced against each other by way of obtaining a complete and self-consistent view. Wives are enjoined to be subject to their husbands in all things as the church is subject to Christ in all things (*verse 24*). Then the husband is commanded to love the wife even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it (*verse 25*). The wife is not the slave of the husband, a piece of personal property which he may treat as he will. The relation is a freely chosen one. Love on the husband's part is the fundamental condition for his exercise of authority in the Christian sense. The subjection on the wife's part and the authority on the husband's part both thus lose all their objectionable features. There is nothing legal in the subjection or the authority. All is spiritual, voluntary and free. The whole conception of marriage in this passage is based on the essential nature of things. Christ simply restores the fundamental and elemental principles of marriage grounded in the nature of the marriage tie itself and the creation of man and woman.

The measure of Christ's love for the church is that he "gave himself up for it." *Verses 26 and 27* continue the thought by summing up the end which Christ had in view in giving up himself for the church.

might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the [1]washing of water with the word, 27 that he might present the church to himself a glorious *church*, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it

[1]Gr. laver.

In these verses the marriage relation is the underlying figure of Christ's relations to the church. This is interpreted by the moral and religious truths involved in Christ's dealings with the church. "That he might sanctify it." Sanctify means to set apart to God's service, or to purify by moral and spiritual cleansing. Here probably the word carries both meanings, since both the beginning and the outcome of the sanctifying process are given, and since also it is described in its ceremonial meaning as well as in the sense of a moral and spiritual process. "Having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." Washing might be translated "laver" or "bath." "The word" is without the article in Greek, and is rather "a word." The prenuptial bath of the bride is probably thought of by the writer and the symbolic and ceremonial act of baptism is possibly to be understood as the parallel act of the church. Most commentators without hesitation see a reference to baptism in the phrase "washing of water with the word." Of course this is possible. Yet there is some inconsistency in the idea of the church as such being baptized. Individuals of course received baptism but not the church. On the other hand there would be a striking appropriateness in a reference to baptism in order to carry out the parallel to the figure of the bride and bridegroom in the passage before us. There is, however, no magical efficacy attributed to baptism. If it is meant it could only present the idea of cleansing in its first meaning of setting apart by means of a symbol. It is a symbol, not a sacrament. It conveys no grace in and of itself. "With the word," if baptism is meant, can only refer to the word of the administrator of the ordinance in the name of the three Persons of the Trinity.

Verse 27 describes the perfected church. Literally the first words may be rendered "that he himself might present to himself a glorious church." The figure of marriage continues. The bride was usually presented to the bridegroom by the bridegroom's friend. Here the bridegroom presents the bride to himself. "Not having spot (impurity of any kind) or wrinkle" (sign of age or decay) but "should be

should be holy and without blemish. 28 Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: 29 for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; 30 be-

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holy (completely consecrated and pure) and without blemish" (having no defect of any kind). In order to a clear grasp of the full meaning of this beautiful description of the church under the figure of a bride one needs to read Rev. xix: 7-9 and xxi: 2-10. There the consummation is described; here it is predicted. The terms of this description can apply fully only to the glorified church. At no stage in the earthly career of the church does it answer fully to the terms of this ideal picture. The writer has in mind clearly the universal church. It is now in a state of imperfection. It is undergoing purification, has blemishes and spots. The purifying process will continue until the church is perfect and glorious. This ideal of the universal church is quite in keeping with the fundamental thought of this epistle, the summing up of all things into a unity in Jesus Christ.

"Even so" (*verse 28*), that is, just as Christ loved the church, "even so, ought husbands also to love their own wives." Christ loved the church which is his body. The wife is in like manner as it were a part of the husband. The command is not: "Love your wives as you love your bodies," but, "love your wives as sustaining a relation to you as close and intimate as the church, Christ's body, sustains to him;" in other words, "love them as constituting your own bodies." The next clause "he that loveth his own wife loveth himself," does not mean that the love of the wife is nothing more than self love. It is true, as he continues, "no man ever hated his own flesh," but this is using the lower to enforce the higher. It would empty this passage of its Christian idealism if the love of husband for wife were put on the plane of ordinary self love. As has been observed if this were all the apostle had in mind he would scarcely have needed to exhort husbands to love their wives. Self-love in this lower sense usually takes care of itself. The aim of the apostle is to develop the higher conception of unity in Christ. The husband and wife are a striking example of the unity which binds all humanity together in Christ. The best and highest interest of the husband is to recognize this identity of life with the wife, and we do not grasp its full meaning

cause we are members of his body. 31 [1]For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church. 33 Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and *let* the wife *see* that she fear her husband.

[1]Gen. ii. 24.

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until we think of it as parallel to Christ's identity with his church. Properly understood, then, all love for humanity, and in a very special degree, a man's love for his wife is self-love. But it is not ordinary self-love. It is the higher self-love of the gospel.

Verse 31 sets forth the law of marriage as it appears in Gen. ii: 24. "The two shall become one flesh." This reaffirms the original relation of husband and wife, and shows how advanced and penetrating was the writer of Genesis in his ideal of the marriage relation. Marriage in Ephesians is put on the same basis. Its obligations are enforced in a new way, that is, by its relation to Christ, but in principle it remains as originally founded. The marriage tie supersedes all other natural ties. Here Paul repeats not only what is taught in Genesis but that which came from Jesus himself (Matt. xix: 5-6).

"This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church." Paul means by mystery what he has been saying as to the relation of husband and wife as well as that between Christ and the church. The thought is not that the subject is mysterious in the sense of being beyond our grasp. It is rather that we now know it as one of the wonders of revelation which God has disclosed to us in the gospel. The Roman Catholic church builds up the idea of marriage as one of the seven sacraments on this passage. But there is nothing whatever in the words to warrant them in so doing. The word for "mystery" here is translated "sacrament" in the Latin versions. But it is an entirely misleading translation, since "sacrament" has come to have an ecclesiastical meaning widely separated from that of the word mystery as employed in this passage.

Verse 33 concludes his injunction to husbands and wives. Having enforced their reciprocal duties by a reference to Christ and the church, and in *verse 32* having returned to that thought, he closes by giving a practical turn to the subject. "Nevertheless," that is,

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 [1]Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), 3 that it may be well with thee, and thou [2]mayest

[1]Ex. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16. [2]Or, shalt.

although I have been indicating a relation between Christ and the church, "do ye also severally love each one his own wife as himself: and let the wife see that she fear her husband." The King James version employs the word "reverence" instead of fear. The American and Canterbury revisions both translate "fear." The word means "fear," however, as qualified by the preceding account of the relationship between husband and wife. There is nothing abject or slavish involved.

In vi: 1-4 the duties of children and parents are briefly summed up. "Children obey your parents in the Lord." We have met the phrase "in the Lord" repeatedly in our previous exposition of this epistle. The whole of duty under Christianity takes on a new meaning as being performed "in the Lord." This unity in Christ not only defines in a new way all human obligations, but reinforces the will in its discharge of the obligation. "For this is right." This accords with the fundamental law of right and it is the fulfillment of the command in the Decalogue. "The first commandment with promise." The promise itself is quoted as given in Ex. xx: 12; Deut v: 16. The quotation is not literal and exact but contains all the essentials of the original promise. Prosperity and length of days are among the rewards for obedience to parents. Nothing could well be more central or fundamental to the welfare of society than obedience to parents. Chaos rules elsewhere when family life decays.

Here again the apostle enjoins upon fathers the reciprocal duties which they owe their children. "Provoke not your children to wrath." The father in ancient society had almost absolute authority over the child. There was a sternness and a severity which would thus naturally arise which needed curbing. Apart from the tenderness and considerateness of the weak and helpless which Christianity enjoins, there is always danger of tyranny and cruelty in dealing with children. "Provoke" here is the same word as that used in iv: 26 for "wrath." The meaning is "do not exasperate your children by harsh and inconsiderate treatment." The father's duty is

live long on the [1]earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

5 [2]Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your [3]masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your

[1]Or, land. [2]Gr. Bondservants. [3]Gr. lords.

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then further defined on the positive side: "nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." The word "nurture" means about what we mean by the familiar phrase "bring up." "Chastening" here means training or discipline, including instruction as well as chastisement, when necessary, and guidance to right living. "Admonition" means practically what we ordinarily mean by the word. This is Paul's brief summary of the moral education of the child. But he adds his usual significant phrase with a slight variation, "of the Lord." All the moral training of the child then is to take its character and derive its chief value from its relation to the Lord.

There is no warrant in this passage for infant baptism. But there is clear command to teach Christian truth to children. The instructions assume intelligence enough in the children to understand. Children who are capable of believing should be admitted into the church upon the exercise of faith and upon confession of Christ. Apart from such children as are in the church, however, this passage sets up a Christian ideal for the nurture and training of all children. The moral and spiritual ideal of the gospel is here prescribed for all training of children. But there is no recognition of any ecclesiastical relation of the child apart from the conversion of the child. This is simply to express in other words the idea that in Christ all acts are voluntary and personal. To impose church membership on children without their voluntary choice is to rob them of one of their chief privileges.

Verses 5 to 9 set forth the duties of masters and slaves. "According to the flesh are your masters." Those addressed were not servants in the ordinary modern sense but slaves. "Masters" means "lords," or owners. They were the human masters as contrasted with Christ their spiritual master. Masters and slaves were in the same church. A new form of social life was created by the gospel, a democracy scarcely dreamed of by ancient civilization. "With fear and trembling." Paul employs this phrase in several places

heart, as unto Christ; 6 not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers: but as [1]servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the [2]heart; 7 with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: 8 knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. 9 And,

[1]Gr. Bondservant [2]Gr. soul.

(see 1 Cor. ii: 3; 2 Cor. vii: 15; Phil. ii: 12). It means with earnest desire to perform duty properly, or with a due sense of the weight of responsibility involved. "Singleness of your heart." Compare the words of Jesus in Matt. vi: 22 and 24; also Rom. xii: 8; 2 Cor. viii: 2. "Singleness of heart" means serving one master as supreme, or having one aim which governs all others. The service of the fleshly master was subordinate to and a part of the service of Christ.

"Not in the way of eyeservice as menpleasers; but as servants of Christ." Another and slightly different aspect of their obedience. It must not be hypocritical outward service, nor regulated by any mere desire to please men rather than Christ. "Doing the will of God from the heart," emphasizes the duty of cheerful service. It is not to be obedience under protest but obedience gladly accepted as the will of God.

Verse 7 scarcely adds anything save new emphasis by way of repetition. "With good will" is very similar to "from the heart" with perhaps the added thought that there is to be no resentment against the master. The whole of the obedience is to be made thus acceptable because it is "unto the Lord, and not unto men."

Verse 8 sets forth a broad general principle of compensation in the kingdom of God. Slaves were owned by their earthly masters and had no claim on them for rewards for service. Paul reminds these Christian slaves, however, that slave and master alike are under a law of just and equitable compensation in God's kingdom. Yet it is not an arbitrary arrangement of God. It is based on the nature of things. Whatsoever "good thing" each man doeth he shall receive "the same" from the Lord whether he be bond or free. A man's deeds come back to him in the kingdom of Christ. No artificial or temporary arrangement in human society, such as slavery, can defeat the operation of this law of spiritual equity under Christ.

Verse 9 enjoins masters to practice the same Christian principles in their dealing with their slaves. "Same things" here means the

ye [1]masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

[1]Gr, lords

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same Christian principles. "Forbear threatening." It is easy to threaten where one possesses power. Compulsion is not the true rule of conduct for slave owners. Christ requires that the slave be dealt with as a brother, not as a chattel, a piece of ordinary property. "Their Master and yours." Slave owners are the slaves of Christ. Slave and master stand on a level before him. "There is no respect of persons with him." He recognizes none of the artificial arrangements of human society as the law of his dealing with men. Of course these words do not imply that Christ recognizes no moral and spiritual differences in men. The reference is to another kind of distinction. Superficial and transient differences of the social order he does not recognize in his treatment of men.

We observe here how completely Paul brings the ancient institution of slavery under the rule of Christian principles. In fact his exposition of the relations of slave and master undermines slavery in principle. It was recognized as an existing institution. Christian teachers would have been guilty of great folly if they had denounced it. But the gospel leaven was introduced and it was only a question of time until the Christian ideal of man's relations to his brother would overthrow slavery. The epistle to Philemon is quite instructive on this subject, since it is a letter written by Paul to a master and sent to him by his runaway slave. Throughout the passage in Ephesians the idea of unity in Christ is clearly expressed. The morality of the gospel centres everywhere in Christ.

The Christian Armor. (vi: 10-20.)

"Finally:" For the rest, from henceforth, "be strong in the Lord." The verb is passive, be strengthened, receive strength. "In the Lord" represents Christ as the source of our strength. As being in him (cf John xv: 1ff) we derive our strength from him. "The strength of his might," means his unbounded power. What you need is a power far beyond anything you possess in yourselves.

"Put on the whole armor of God." The emphasis here is upon the completeness of the armor to be put on. "To stand" means to hold

10 [1]Finally, be [2]strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.
11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our wrestling is not against [3]flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the

[1]Or Henceforth. [2]Gr, be made powerful. [3]Gr. blood and flesh.

your ground against the foe, not to retreat or fall in the struggle. "Against the wiles." Wiles here means cunning arts, deceits and trickery. A similar military term would be "stratagems" although this is not the precise meaning of the word here used.

"For our wrestling." Paul varies the figure here. The armor is not for wrestling but for another sort of struggle. Wrestling is here employed not in its strict literal meaning, but in the sense of contest or conflict. "Is not against flesh and blood." The order in the Greek is "blood and flesh." We have to contend with a superhuman power, whose arts and resources are not to be measured by the powers of humanity so far as these are limited by flesh and blood. It is not a contest on the physical plane merely. "Against the principalities, against the powers." These are enumerated in the same order in several other passages (Eph. i: 21; iii: 10; Col. i: 16; ii: 10, 15). It is difficult to determine more precisely what is meant by these terms. Evidently they are forces of evil which oppose the Christian in his onward course. Since these two words occur in the same order in several enumerations they may denote certain ranks, the higher being named first. This, however, is uncertain. "World-rulers of this darkness." This is a further description of the principalities and powers. They rule the world which is invested with spiritual darkness. "Spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" is a summary of the entire list meaning the whole army of evil forces. "In the heavenly places" probably corresponds to "the air" in ii: 2. The abode of these evil beings is in the invisible region of the air, the heavenly places above the earth. These are the foes against whom the Christian is to wage the contest.

In *verse 13* he repeats the injunction to take up "the whole armor of God" in order that "ye may be able to withstand in the evil day." The evil day does not refer to a particular day in the future, but to

evil day, and, having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the [1]gospel of peace; 16 withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil *one*.

[1]Gr. good tidings. See Mt. 4. 23 marg.

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any evil day which may come, when the powers of evil marshal their forces and the attack is severe. "And having done all, to stand." This means having won the fight to be able to hold your ground. It is not a drawn battle or a bare victory leaving you exhausted but one in which you will remain firm in your position of righteousness and your battle for the truth.

In *verse 14* he proceeds with the description of the Christian armor, "Stand therefore, having girded, etc." Maintain your position after putting on the armor. The order usually observed by soldiers in putting on their armor is followed by Paul here. The girdle and breastplate were usually connected, the lower part of the breastplate being attached to the girdle. Truth is here the girdle of the loins. In Is. lix: 17 there is a similar passage, where the breastplate and helmet are mentioned. No doubt Paul thought of Isaiah's description. Truth and righteousness are closely related ideas. The righteousness here is actual righteous character or holy living rather than the righteousness of Christ. The girdle supported the soldier on the field when quick vigorous action was required, and the breastplate of course covered vital parts.

"Having shod your feet with the preparation, etc." The question here is as to the meaning of "preparation." The gospel is defined as the gospel of peace. What is it to be shod with the preparation of the gospel? Several answers have been given. One is that reference is made to the act of preparing the way for the gospel. This does not seem likely, although the word in itself might yield the meaning. The apostle, however, is enumerating qualities rather than forms of activity or functions. Others understand the word as meaning "stability" or "firm footing" a sense sometimes, found in the Old Testament in the Septuagint translation (Dan. xi: 7; Ezek. ii: 6; iii: 3; Zech. v: 10; Ps. lxxxviii: 14). In these passages the word means foundation or base. It does not appear elsewhere in the New

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God: 18 with all prayer and supplication praying
at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance
and supplication for all the saints, 19 and on my behalf, that utter-
ance may be given unto me [1]in opening my mouth, to make known
with boldness the mystery of the [2]gospel, 20 for which I am an am-
bassador in [3]chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

[1]Or, in opening my mouth with boldness, to make known. [2]Gr, Good tidings. See Mt. 4:23 marg. [3]Gr. a chain.

Testament. In the Septuagint the word has another meaning and one which suits the connection here. It is "preparedness" or "readiness" (see Neh. ii: 3; Ps. x: 17; ix: 41). This is probably its significance in the passage before us: "Having shod your feet with readiness or preparedness for the gospel of peace." Readiness here means readiness, not to preach the gospel, but readiness or preparedness for the conflict. The word must be taken as a part of the general description of the equipment of the soldier. He is to put on the various parts of the armor and be prepared or ready for the battle. The conflict of course is spiritual and it is this which permits the paradox. The "gospel of peace" is that which makes the Christian soldier ready or prepared for every conflict in which he may be called upon to take part. The gospel is the gospel of peace in several senses. It brings peace between God and man and between men.

Faith is next compared to the shield "Taking up the shield of faith." There were two kinds of shields, a small round one and an oblong shield about 4 feet long and 2 feet wide. Probably the latter is the shield described here. It was made of wood and covered with leather. The "fiery darts of the evil one," were darts or arrows with heads heated red hot, or firebearing by having pieces of burning material attached. These would bury themselves in the shield and remain there, leaving the man behind unharmed. (Compare 2 Thess. iii: 3; Matt. xiii: 19; 1 John ii: 13f.) The evil one here probably means "the devil." Herodotus mentions the fact that in ancient warfare it was customary to attach pieces of tow to darts and arrows and having dipped them in pitch to set them on fire before shooting them. In the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan has made use of this figure in a very graphic picture of Christian's conflict with Apollyon.

"Take the helmet of salvation." In 1 Thess. v: 8 Paul enjoins his readers to put on for a helmet "the hope of salvation." Salva-

tion in the passage before us means salvation in its various phases of meaning, deliverance from the guilt, corruption and power of sin, resulting in a present process of gradual cleansing and transformation which will culminate in a future glorification. It is this condition which constitutes the helmet of the Christian armor. "The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." The ordinary interpretation of these words is the correct one. The meaning is the sword which the Spirit himself employs, the word of God. The "word" here is the spoken word and is not the same as that found in Hebrews iv: 12, although there is no radical difference between the two.

"Prayer and supplication." The first of these words is used only of prayer to God, never of requests to men, while the second means a request whether addressed to God or man. The words are to be connected with the injunction to "stand" in *verse 14*. They are to stand, having put on the Christian armor, and now in addition to the armor they are to "stand" "with all prayer and supplication." Their prayers must of course be directed to God and they should be petitions for specific blessings. "At all seasons:" under all circumstances. "In the Spirit" means not from the spirit or heart, but in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indites and directs our prayers when offered by us in faith. (cf Rom. viii: 26, 27.) "Watching thereunto." Prayer is not an idle, dreamy exercise, but calls for alertness of mind and the activity of all our faculties. There is probably an allusion here to the words of Jesus "watch and pray." "In all perseverance." Prayer, again, to attain its object must be persevering. In this form of well-doing especially we must not grow weary if we would obtain the best results. "Supplication for all the saints and on my behalf." The prepositions in this clause are not the same. They are to pray generally "for," or touching all the saints. All the saints everywhere are to be embraced within the sympathetic range of their prayers to God. "On my behalf" suggests more direct and specific prayer for him as an apostle and preacher of the gospel.

In the next verse we have the explanation of his request for prayer "on his behalf," since he proceeds to indicate the particular point of need in his own situation. "That utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth." He desires their prayers that he may have the necessary message, or words of truth to communicate when he

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: 22 whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts.

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stands up to speak. "To make known with boldness." The word here translated boldness has several shades of meaning in various connections. Freedom and unreservedness in speech, openness, frankness, free and fearless confidence, assurance, etc., are among the principal definitions of the word. As employed here it probably means freedom and confidence coupled with boldness. "The mystery of the gospel." In i: 9 Paul has referred to the mystery which had previously been hidden in the eternal counsels of God.

"For which I am an ambassador in chains." The margin reads "in a chain" as the noun is singular. Thus Paul sets forth his high estimate of the apostle and preacher. He is an ambassador. But ambassadors usually are accorded the highest respect as representing another country. Here, however, the ambassador of Jesus Christ is in chains. But he is not subdued by this fact and he desires their prayers that he may be given grace to "speak boldly, as I ought to speak." Although, according to Roman military custom chained by the hand to the soldier who guarded him, he has no thought other than that he will continue to preach the glorious gospel of his Lord and Savior.

Closing Words. 6:21-24

Verses 21 and 22 are closely parallel to *verses 7 and 8* in the fourth chapter of Colossians. There also Paul refers to Tychicus. He was the bearer of this and the Colossian epistle. In Colossians Onesimus is also mentioned. There are a number of references to Tychicus elsewhere. In Acts xx: 4; 2 Tim. iv:11-12 and Titus iii: 12, we find mention of him. In Colossians Paul calls him fellowservant. Here he is the "beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord." "That ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts." Knowing of Paul's imprisonment the readers would be solicitous for his welfare. The closing words of the epistle are as usual in the form of a benediction. "Peace be to the brethren." Peace and grace are the chief terms of the salutation in i: 2. Here both words recur along

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ [1]with *a love* incorruptible.

[1]Or, in incorruption. See Rom. 2:7.

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with others, but in the reverse order. Peace is now mentioned first. "To the brethren." Another indication that the epistle was directed to a group of churches rather than the church at Ephesus alone is found here. Usually Paul's benedictions are in the second rather than the third person. Had he been writing simply to the church at Ephesus, so well-known and so beloved by him, he would have conformed to his custom and would have written "peace be to you." "And love with faith." He takes for granted that they have faith, but he desires that love shall accompany faith. In Gal. v: 6 Paul speaks of faith as working through love.

The closing word is "grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption." (mrg.) "Uncorruptness" is a far better translation of the Greek word than "sincerity" in the King James version. The word is applied in the New Testament to the incorrupt and undecaying nature of those who have obtained immortality. The word is applied to God in Rom i: 23. The dead are described as incorruptible in 1 Cor. xv: 52. See also Rom. ii: 7 and 2 Tim. i: 10. Love for Christ is thus described as possessing an incorruptible immortal quality. Some commentators connect this word especially with the preceding word "grace." "Uncorruptness" defines love to Christ in contrast with corruptible and transitory forms of earthly love. Thus it is lifted to the plane of the divine and immortal life, and as grace bestows this life, such a quality in love would be the direct result of the bestowment of grace. This word ("uncorruptness") therefore is a fitting close to this great epistle. The last word in it hints at the final outcome and in the glory of the incorruptible and immortal life through the gospel. And this in turn bends back to the great words of i: 3-14, where the source of the life is described. The life that flows from God returns to him.

STUDIES IN COLOSSIANS.

Introduction.

The city of Colossae was situated on the river Lycus, a tributary to the Maeander, in Phrygia, Asia Minor. It was a city of much importance in ancient times. Eusebius records the destruction of Colossae along with Hierapolis and Laodicea, neighboring cities, by an earthquake in the reign of Nero. Colossae stood on a very important route of commerce in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. There was thus opportunity for the introduction and spread of new ideas. The epistle to the Colossians affords evidence, as we shall see, that philosophic speculations common to Asia Minor generally had obtained footing in Colossae and had in a considerable degree affected the church there.

The apostle Paul himself had never visited Colossae or its neighbor, Laodicea, as he tells us in Col. ii: 1. Epaphras, however, came from this region and labored among the Colossians (iv: 12, 13). Timothy is included in Paul's salutation in Col. i: 1. From this it is reasonable to infer that Timothy was known to the Colossians and it is quite possible that both Epaphras and Timothy were among the founders of the church at Colossae.

The church at Colossae is treated by the apostle as a Gentile church. In Col. i: 21 he describes its members as "you being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your wicked works." It is not definitely known whether or not there were Jewish members among these Gentile Christians. In a great many instances the Jews of the Dispersion were the nucleus of the churches outside of Palestine. A colony of Jews was established in Lydia and Phrygia. It consisted of two thousand families transplanted from Babylonia and Mesopotamia by Antiochus the Great. Lightfoot estimates the number of Jews in this region in B.C. 62 as not less than eleven thousand (see *The Churches of the Lycus*, p. 20). But whether there were scattering Jewish Christians in the church at Colossae or not, it is evident that some of the influences at work there arose in Judaism, and were injurious to the faith of the Colossians. This appears clearly from

the references in the warnings and exhortations of the apostle in chapter 2 of the epistle (see verses 11, 14, 16, 17).

The only definite information we have as to the nature of the false teachings which were beginning to be current in Colossae is that supplied by the epistle itself. Several features of this teaching come to distinct expression in Paul's language. It was called "philosophy and vain deceit" (ii: 8); this was "after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (ii: 8). There was also the tendency to exalt the outward forms into the first place (ii:17). There was also angel worship (ii: 18). There was along with this a combination of false humility with an inflated mind, "vainly puffed up" (ii: 18). There was also a strong ascetic tendency with severity to the body and a shunning of outward contact with things which were thought to be corrupting in their influences (ii: 20-23). It is to be noted then that while there were Jewish elements in the doctrines opposed in Colossians, these are not the same as we find in Galatians and Romans.

Now it is evident from the above statements that there were hurtful influences at work at Colossae very closely related to Judaism. In ii:16 there is a direct reference to the Sabbath, which was a Jewish institution. The severity to the body and ascetic practices referred to suggest the possible influence of the Essenes, a Jewish sect. It is not definitely known, however, that there were Essenes in this region of Asia Minor. There were tendencies like those of Essenism in the heathen cults and philosophies also.

In some of the references of the epistle it is evident that the apostle is combatting a form of teaching somewhat closely akin to what is definitely known in later Christian history as Gnosticism. Here, however, this gnostic philosophy has not yet attained its mature form. The later Gnosticism had three outstanding marks. First, it assumed a great gulf of separation between the material and the spiritual universe, between nature and God. Second, it assumed a series of aeons or emanations from God which mediated between him and the lowest and most distant parts of the material universe. Third, it was held that emancipation from the body and in general from the evils of the physical world could be attained by means of knowledge or intellectual insight. Hence the name Gnosticism.

Now there are references in the epistle which make it easy to connect the false teaching in the church with the gnostic tendency although not of such a character as to warrant us in pronouncing it Gnosticism in the later and more developed sense. In the epistle there is a reference to the worshipping of angels, who were doubtless regarded as intermediate beings between God and man. In Christ it is asserted, "are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (ii: 3). Here the true knowledge is set over against the false. Dr. Abbott says: "In the three points of exclusiveness, asceticism, and angelology, the Colossian heresy shows affinities with Essenism, which, as Lightfoot remarks, had an affinity with Gnosticism, so that it might be called Gnostic Judaism." Again he says: "Notwithstanding its affinities with Gnosticism, the Colossian heresy must be regarded as belonging to an earlier stage than the developed Gnosticism usually understood by that name, even earlier, indeed, than Cerinthus. There is, for example, no allusion to the aeons of later Gnosticism, nor to the properly gnostic conception of the relation of the demiurgic agency to the supreme God. 'That relation,' says Lightfoot, 'was represented first, as imperfect appreciation; next as entire ignorance; lastly, as direct antagonism.' The second and third are the standing points of Cerinthus and the later Gnostic teachers respectively. The first was probably the position of the Colossian false teachers. The imperfections of the natural world, they would urge, were due to the limited capacities of these angels to whom the demiurgic work was committed, and to their imperfect sympathy with the supreme God; but, at the same time, they might fitly receive worship as mediators between God and man; and indeed humanity seemed, in its weakness, to need the intervention of some such beings less remote from itself than the highest heaven." (See Abbott Commentary on Ephesians and Colossians, pp. xlix and l.)

Beyond question some such teaching as this had begun to make headway among the Colossian Christians and in the epistle Christ is presented as the complete Revelation of God and the head of all angelic power, the one Mediator between God and man.

Time and Place of Writing.

There are many evidences in the epistle itself that it was written by the apostle Paul during his Roman captivity and sent by the same

messenger who bore the Ephesian epistle, about A.D. 61-63. Paul seems to have been considerably stirred by reports brought to him by Epaphras who visited him during his captivity. Epaphras came from Colossae and in all probability he brought word to Paul that false teachings were making headway in and around Colossae. Not far away were the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, both of which are mentioned by the apostle (Col. iv: 12, 13). For the apostle Paul, the impulse to write and correct injurious teachings would be very strong. His solicitude expresses itself in the epistle. The Colossians however are told that there was another epistle he desired them to read which was to reach them from Laodicea. At the same time he wished this epistle to be read to the Laodicians (iv: 16).

Now the letter to the Laodiceans was in all probability our epistle to the Ephesians. It will be recalled that the evidence indicates rather clearly that our epistle to the Ephesians was a general letter addressed not to the church at Ephesus but to a group of churches. Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae were neighboring cities which would naturally be included as a part of the destination of the Ephesian epistle (see introduction to Ephesians).

That Paul was in prison when he wrote the epistle to the Colossians is clear from references in the epistle itself. In iv: 18 he says. "Remember my bonds" and in iv: 10 he refers to "Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner." The bearer of this epistle is Tychicus (iv: 7, 8). It will be recalled that Tychicus was also the messenger who bore the Ephesian epistle (Eph. vi: 21, 22). Indeed the two verses in Col. iv: 7, 8 are also exactly the same as those in Eph. vi: 21, 22. In both the name of the messenger is given and warm praise is bestowed upon him. In iv: 9 Paul mentions Onesimus, the runaway slave, whom he is sending back to his master, Philemon, who lived at Collossae, and who bore to his master from Paul our epistle of Philemon. Onesimus accompanies Tychicus and with him is to make known to the brethren at Colossae "all things that are done here."

Genuineness of the Epistle.

There was never a question as to the Pauline authorship of the epistle until modern times. It is included in the Muratorian canon, which dates from the latter half of the second century, and in all canons and versions since that time. There are no quotations from

it in the writings of the apostolic fathers. There are references, however, which seem to indicate an acquaintance with the epistle in Polycarp and Ignatius.

Justin Martyr early in the second century quotes from Col. 1:15-17, using the language of the epistle which describes Christ as "the firstborn of God, and before all creatures." Theophilus of Antioch refers to the same passage. In the writings of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, there are frequent and abundant references to the epistle. Dr. Abbott says: "Considering the frequent use of the epistle to the Ephesians, it is remarkable that the traces of this epistle previous to Irenaeus are so few and uncertain. Its shortness seems an inadequate explanation. Probably the true account is that the epistle being so largely controversial, its use would be less familiar to those who had no concern with the heresies with which it deals" Dr. Abbott thus states and explains a difficulty which naturally arises in comparing the very early use of Ephesians with that of Colossians. There is, however, no indication in any early or later writing of any serious question as to the Pauline authorship of the epistle until within the last hundred years. Some questioning has arisen as a result of the modern critical movement. I shall note some of the more important of these.

There is one form of the modern objection to the Pauline authorship of the epistle which need not detain us save for very brief mention. One writer, Holtzmann, held that the epistle as we have it was founded on a shorter geniune epistle of Paul, of which we have no direct knowledge. He attempts to extract this original Pauline epistle from the epistle as we have it. Of course almost any writing may be successfully abridged and still make sense. And no one can disprove absolutely a theory based on an ingenious handling of the material in accordance with such a theory. A skillful editor can obtain a much briefer Colossians that will read connectedly and possess a certain unity. At the same time it must be added that disproof in such cases, in the absence of other evidence, is quite as strong as the proof. One inevitably asks what became of the briefer original from which the more expanded epistle came? How did it come to pass that Paul's own letter perished and the spurious expansion of it came to be accepted so generally without misgiving or question?

The objections to the Pauline authorship are chiefly three. First, the objection based on the words used in the epistle and on its literary style; second, the objection based on alleged inconsistencies or contradictions between the teachings of the epistle and those of other writings of the apostle Paul; and third, the objection which claims that the false teachings combatted in the epistle show that it was written at a later date. I will consider each of these objections in order.

One phase of the first objection calls attention to the presence of numerous words found in Colossians and not found elsewhere in Paul's writings. These number forty-eight. This objection has comparatively little weight since Paul discusses new and important aspects of truth in the epistle before us. If he were dealing with the older problems, discussed by him in earlier writings, it might occasion surprise that there should be found so many new words. But surely a writer must be permitted to employ new words if he is expressing new ideas; and besides, in the case of a writer so gifted and resourceful as the apostle to the Gentiles, we must allow something for his own wealth of language as well as of ideas, and his love for variety in the expression of his ideas. Another fact helps to explain the wide range of words employed by Paul. He was a great traveler and of course heard many new words and would naturally add many of them to his own stock. Abbott quotes a statement from Dr. Mahaffy in which the parallel case of Xenophon is cited as follows: "His (Xenophon's) later tracts are full of un-Attic words, picked up from his changing surroundings; and, what is more curious, in each of them there are many words used by him only once; so that on the ground of variation in diction each single book might be, and, indeed, has been, rejected as non-Xenophontic." He then goes on to show that such variation in language not only applies in Xenophon to words which would be needed only once, but also in cases where a different word is used to express the same idea. "Now, of all classical writers," he concludes, "Xenophon is perhaps (except Herodotus) the only man whose life corresponded to St. Paul's in its roving habit, which would bring him into contact with the spoken Greek of varying societies." In view, then, of Paul's varied experience as a traveler, and of the subjects discussed in Colossians, the objection based on the presence of words used only in this epistle is seen to have little force.

Again it is objected that there are wanting many words which are favorite forms of expression in other writings of Paul. Under this head come Paul's terms for "righteous," "righteousness," "obedience," "law," "believe," and also a number of adverbs and conjunctions found in abundance in his argumentative epistles to the Galatians and Romans. But it has often been pointed out that some of these favorite words are wanting in other acknowledged epistles of Paul such as 1 Thess. and 1 Cor. Besides this we are to keep in mind the fact that the entire group of words in question belongs to the epistles which deal with the controversy with the Judaizers. Some of Paul's epistles are exceedingly argumentative, and he would inevitably employ terms in these which would not be necessary in quiet expositions like the Colossian and Ephesian epistles.

The long sentences found in Colossians have also been the occasion of objection to the Pauline authorship of the epistle. But that Paul is capable of writing very long and more or less involved sentences is clear from various passages in Romans and Galatians. For example Rom. i: 1-7; 14:16; Gal. 2: 3-5, 6-9, etc.

Of course we admit, as self-evident from the epistle itself, the absence of certain ideas of Paul which are treated at great length and with much emphasis elsewhere. In Galatians and Romans Paul discusses a circle of ideas which had their roots in the Jewish attempt to construe Christianity in terms of Judaism. These false teachers combatted Paul and made trouble for him wherever it was possible. With all the vehemence and force of his strong nature and clear intellect he sets forth the true meaning of the gospel. Justification by faith is the universal principle of the gospel. Paul opposes this to the Jewish doctrine of justification by the works of the law, the necessity for circumcision, and ceremonial righteousness generally. His polemic against the Judaizers takes him necessarily into the very heart of the Jewish ideas and doctrines. At every point he opposes the true meaning of the gospel to the Jewish perversion.

Now the Colossian epistle was written under circumstances which were wholly different. There is no evidence that the Judaizers were busy with their evil teachings at Colossae. There was no direct attack of any kind upon the apostle or his teachings. What he had learned from Epaphras convinced him, however, that a heresy of another kind was beginning to make headway. The exposition of

truth in the epistle is therefore aimed implicitly or explicitly at this new form of false teaching. We do not find in it the same abruptness of language and style, the same heat and impetuosity of argument and rebuke, as we find in Galatians and Romans. Nor do we find the same set of favorite words and ideas. Of course not. These would be out of place in the new connection. But we find no contradiction with earlier teachings, indeed we find these assumed in our epistle and incidentally referred to or implied in numerous connections. It is a groundless proceeding therefore, to raise objection to the Pauline authorship of the epistle because it is not a repetition for substance of Galatians and Romans.

This brings us to the third form of the objection to the Pauline authorship of the epistle, viz., that it deals with a form of teaching which arose in opposition to Christianity at a much later date. This teaching is known in the history of the time as Gnosticism. The controversy between those who hold that Paul wrote the epistle and those who deny it, in so far as it turns upon the question of Gnosticism, is a somewhat complicated one. Some opponents of the Pauline authorship assert that the epistle combats a form of teaching much later than Paul's day, while others claim that it is an attempt to incorporate the Gnostic speculations into Christianity by some writer who saw no necessary contradiction between the two.

There is not space here to consider all the bearings of this controversy. The fact that critics hold directly opposing views as to the aim of the teaching in the epistle itself should give us pause in drawing hasty conclusions. One or two things need to be emphasized, however, as to the internal evidence afforded by the epistle itself. The first is that we do not possess in Colossians any definite or very clearly defined statements as to the form of error which the epistle was intended to refute. Various things are implied and a number of incidental references are made to these errors. But nowhere do we find clear and distinct definition or formulation of the views in question. Again it is to be noted that the literature of Gnosticism which has come down to us sheds no clear light on the particular phase of that speculation which was current when this epistle was written. As already stated, Gnosticism seemed to pass through a number of stages. The aeons or emanations which were assumed by the Gnostics were of various degrees of remoteness from God. At first they were sim-

ply defective in their appreciation of God. Next they were ignorant of him, and finally they were opposed to him. The first of these phases of belief seems to correspond with the conditions suggested by the teachings in the epistle to the Colossians. The false teachers at Colossae held some views as to angels and the worship of angels which were unfavorable to the true Christian conception of Christ. This bowing down to angels illustrates the tendency to interpose mediators between the Supreme God and men. The writer of Colossians at every point places Christ above all such mediators. In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead.

The last fact has a bearing on the other phase of the objection to the Pauline authorship, viz., that it came after Paul's day and from the pen of a Christian who sought to amalgamate the Gnostic with the Christian doctrine. Two points are emphasized to make good this claim. One is that in Colossians the idea of reconciliation is prominent, just as it is a very distinct feature of Gnosticism. In reply it is to be noted that while reconciliation is an idea common to both Christianity and Gnosticism there is a vast difference between the ideas of reconciliation in the two systems. With the Gnostics reconciliation was needed because of emanations from God which passed through successive stages of degeneration. The conquest of matter through knowledge was the mode of reconciliation insisted upon by the Gnostics. With Paul on the other hand the reconciliation was moral and spiritual. The separation was due to sin. Man is far from God because of transgression, not because he is the victim of a progressive decline in the nature of created beings who emanated in the first place from God and gradually became opposed to him. The whole conception of the mediation of Christ and the reconciliation of man to God through him is radically opposed to the Gnostic view.

Another Gnostic idea is suggested by the word translated "fulness" (*pleroma*) in the epistle and the inference has been drawn, that, because Paul employs this word, found later in use among the Gnostics, Colossians must have been written by some one holding Gnostic views at a later period. (See Col. ii: 9). On the contrary, it is to be noted that the use of the word in Colossians seems designed to oppose the views of the Gnostics rather than to reproduce them. The Valentinian Gnostics held that the aeons or emanations from God

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were many and that the "fulness" of the divine was to be asserted of them all taken together. In Colossians there is insistence upon the fact that all the divine fullness dwelt in Christ alone. The form of the declaration as we have it in the epistle, therefore, seems particularly directed against a view similar to that of the later Gnostics. As already noted we have no means of determining the exact form of false teaching which was becoming current at Colossae beyond what is suggested in the epistle itself. All the indications found therein suggest the beginnings of the Gnostic doctrine according to which angels or other intermediate beings were supposed to separate God and man. It is beyond question that the writer of the epistle opposes this view and assigns the supreme headship of creation to Christ alone and makes him the sole Mediator between God and man.

A very interesting sidelight is shed upon the question of the genuineness of the epistle to the Colossians by reason of its connection with the epistle to Philemon. The latter epistle was without doubt written by Paul. It was sent by the hand of Onesimus, the runaway slave, to his master, who was accompanied by Tychicus, the bearer of the epistle to the Colossians. Dr. Abbott says. "The coincidence in some of the names mentioned might be explained by the hypothesis that the forger of the longer epistle made use of the shorter. But the differences exclude this supposition (see Salmon, *Introduction*, ch. xx). Colossians mentions Jesus, surnamed Justus, an otherwise unknown person, in addition to those mentioned in Philemon, while Philemon is not mentioned at all. Again while Aristarchus and Epaphras are mentioned in both epistles, it is the former that is called fellow-prisoner in Colossians, the latter in Philemon. But there is nothing in the epistle to Philemon to suggest Colossae as the city of his residence. We learn his connexion with it only by finding his runaway slave Onesimus mentioned in Colossians as "one of you." Having learned this we observe further that Archippus, who in the private epistle appears as an intimate, perhaps son, of Philemon, is mentioned in Colossians in such a way as to suggest that he held office either there or in Laodicea. Certainly the way in which his name is introduced there is as unlike as possible to the contrivance of a forger. That Onesimus alone should be mentioned as Paul's messenger in the letter to Philemon, but Tychicus with him in the public epistle, is perfectly natural." (Commentary on Ephesians, pp. lvii, lviii).

It has been pointed out that the Book of Revelation in the third chapter, verses 14 to 21, where the church at Laodicea is addressed, contains expressions strongly suggestive of the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. In Rev. 3: 14 Christ is called "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." In Col. i: 15 he is called "the firstborn of all creation." Also in Rev. iii: 21 we read "I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne." In Col. 3: 1 is the expression "where Christ is seated on the right hand of God." In Eph. ii: 6 a similar expression is found, "made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Lightfoot and others have insisted that these parallel passages clearly indicate a knowledge on John's part of the earlier writing of Paul. This part seems to possess much force especially as regards the first of the two parallels. The second, in which Christ's throne is spoken of might have been derived by John from other parts of the New Testament, although the language is quite in harmony with the idea of a derivation from Paul's expressions in Colossians and Ephesians. In the first parallel, however, the resemblance is very strong, and the conclusion seems almost forced upon us that there is a connection between the language of John and Paul.

Ephesians and Colossians Compared.

These two epistles written about the same time present marked points of agreement. This was entirely natural. Paul's Roman imprisonment gave him opportunity for reflection upon the transcendent side of the doctrine of Christ's Person, and the necessity for some deliverance from him on the subject arose out of conditions which were beginning to show themselves in the churches. It was natural that in churches situated in the same region there should exist similar spiritual tendencies giving rise to similar needs. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that Colossians and Ephesians exhibit points of very marked resemblance.

At the same time it is to be noted that there are equally striking points of difference. These are not in the nature of contradictions but of variety due to the differences in the spiritual condition of the churches and the points of view of the respective epistles.

A few words first as to the points of agreement. In both epistles much emphasis is given to Christ's general relations to the universe on its heavenly and earthly side. In both Paul dwells upon the gospel as a mystery which had been hidden but is now revealed. In both he calls attention to his own apostleship to the Gentiles as a part of the plan and purpose of God for making known the gospel to all men. In both epistles, again, the apostle represents the church as the body of Christ and gives emphasis to the conception of the universal church. This no doubt is due to his purpose in both epistles, which is to expound and define Christianity in its most universal terms. The errors against which he writes are such as go to the very roots of things and in order to meet them he states Christian truth in the largest possible way. It must be added however, as to the teaching that the church is Christ's body, that while in Ephesians it is brought out with much emphasis and at considerable length, in Colossians it is introduced incidentally and rather assumed as the foundation of other teachings called for by the particular needs of the Colossian Church. In most cases where Ephesians and Colossians deal with the same matters Ephesians treats them more fully than Colossians.

We note next the points of difference. Here of course are numerous minor points which need no special notice. What Paul says about Epaphras and his connection with the Colossian church, his references to the progress of the church and his solicitude for their spiritual welfare would fall under this head. The numerous personal greetings at the end of the epistle are another point of contrast with Ephesians. This harmonizes with the destination of the latter which was a group of churches, while Colossians was written to a single church. In comparing this epistle with that to the Ephesians the chief point of difference is found to consist in the teaching regarding the Person of Christ. As already indicated there is a deep underlying unity of view in the two epistles. But in Colossians, there are marked instances of variation and transfer of emphasis. In Ephesians the eternal purpose of God toward the church and the execution of that purpose through Christ come in for special emphasis. The vital union between Christ and the church is dwelt upon. Especially does Paul elaborate the thought that the church is the body of Christ, and the unity which has followed the breaking down of the

wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles. Now all of this comes out incidentally, or by way of implication, in Colossians. But the writer's mind ranges out into a new set of relations, and it is upon these that the chief emphasis falls. Here he is combatting a special form of dangerous error and his statements as to the Person of Christ have in view its correction. Accordingly we find the supreme headship of Christ made prominent, a headship which extends not only to the church but to the universe at large. In fact we find in Colossians perhaps the most comprehensive and complete statement of Christ's relations to the universe, to be found anywhere in the New Testament. It is true the fourth Gospel contains a similar statement, and Paul presents substantially the same view in Philippians and elsewhere. Colossians was written earlier than the fourth Gospel, however, and its teaching as to Christ's Person affords a striking illustration of the substantial unity of view as between Paul and John.

It is to be noted further that Paul's teaching as to Christ's Person in this epistle is not merely incidental to other teachings. It belongs to the warp and woof of the argument and is formally and fully stated in order to show, by way of contrast with the speculative error he is opposing, just how we are to regard Jesus Christ in his relations to creation. The various points will receive treatment in the commentary proper. In brief they may be summed up as follows: Christ is the image of the invisible God and the source and ground of creation, but is not himself a creature. He is the medium through which the creative act passed. All things were made through him. He is the bond of all created things, since they hold together in and through him. He is the goal of all since all things are "unto him." He is the head of the body, the church, the firstborn from the dead. In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. Through him God is reconciling all things unto himself. He has made peace through the blood of the cross, having conquered the powers of evil through his death. He will carry on the spiritual creation until he shall present the saints holy and without blemish and unreprovable before God.

Analysis of the Epistle to the Colossians.

Salutation, i: 1, 2.

Thanksgiving for Their Progress in the Gospel and the Spread of the Truth, i: 3-8.

Prayer for Their Spiritual Enlargement, i: 9-11.

The Enlargement to be Realized through an Attitude of Thankfulness for Converting Grace Which is Mediated through Christ, i: 12-14.

Christ's Universal Relations, i: 15:23.

a. He is the Image of the Invisible God, i: 15.

b. He is before All Things and the Source, Medium and Bond of All Created Things, i: 15-17.

c He is the Head of the Body, the Church, the First-born from the Dead, i: 18.

d. In Him the Divine Fullness Dwelt, i: 19.

e. Through Him Universal Reconciliation is Made, i: 20.

f. The Colossians were Reconciled through Him, i: 21-23.

Paul's Ministry and Sufferings for Them are According to a Divine Dispensation, i: 24, 25.

Its Aim is to Make Known the Gospel Mystery and Present Them Perfect in Christ, i: 26-29.

He Longs that They May Know His Strivings for Them to the end that They May Understand the Mystery, ii: 1-5.

Exhortation to Continue in Christ as They Began, ii: 6, 7.

Warnings against Error and Exhortations to Conformity to the True Life in Christ, ii: 8--iv: 6.

Warning against False Philosophy, ii:8.

Christ Supplies All Need since in Him is All Divine Fullness, ii: 9-15.

a. In Him They Received Spiritual Circumcision, ii: 11.

b. They Were Raised from the Dead, Having Been Made Alive with Him and Forgiven, ii: 12, 13.

c. The Bond against Us Was Blotted out by the Cross, ii: 14.

d. By the Cross He Triumphed over All Our Spiritual Enemies, ii: 15.

Warning against the False Judgments of Men on the Low Plane of Ceremonialism, ii: 16-19.

Exhortation to Abstain from Fleshly Precepts since They Died to Them, ii: 20-23.

Exhortation to the Risen Life since They Were Raised with Christ from the Dead, iii: 1-4.

Exhortations in Accordance with Their Spiritual Death and Resurrection to a Corresponding Life, iii: 5-17.

a. Mortify your Members Which were Once Given to Sins of Uncleanness, iii: 5-7.

b. Put Away All Sins of Disposition, Anger, etc., iii: 8-11.

c. Put on the Various Graces of Self-Restraint Along With Love and Peace and Thankfulness, iii: 12-15.

d. Let the Word of Christ Abound and Perform Every Duty in His Name, iii: 16-17.

Exhortations to Particular Classes.

a. To Wives, iii: 18.

b. To Husbands, iii: 19.

c. To Children, iii: 20.

d. To Fathers, iii: 21.

e. To Servants, iii: 22-25.

f. To Masters, iv: 1.

Exhortations to All, iv.: 2-6.

a. To Steadfastness in Prayer, iv: 2-4.

b. To a Wise Walk as Christians, iv: 5, 6.

Closing Words.

a. Words in Commendation of Tychicus and Onesimus, iv: 7-9.

b. Salutations from Paul's Companions, iv: 10-14.

c. Instructions to Exchange Epistles with Laodicea, iv: 16.

d. A Word to Archippus, iv: 17.

e. Final Salutation, iv: 18.

1 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and
Timothy [1]our brother, 2 [2]to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ
that are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

[1]Gr. the brother.

[2]Or, to those that are at Colossae, holy and faithful brethren in Christ.

COMMENTARY.

Salutation, 1: 1, 2.

Paul includes the name of Timothy in his salutation here, while he omits it from the salutation in Ephesians. In several other epistles Timothy's name is used by the apostle at the beginning (see 1 and 2 Thess.; Philemon; Phil.; 2 Cor). The reason for the variation between Colossians and Ephesians which were written and sent about the same time, and in other similar instances, we have no means of knowing. It may be suggested that it was less suitable to mention Timothy in Ephesians which was a circular letter than in Colossians which went to a single church. It is possible also that Timothy was known to the brethren at Colossae. This would of course explain the inclusion of his name here. Of one thing we may be confident the inclusion or omission of his name was not a haphazard proceeding on Paul's part. All that we know of him forbids such a view. No one had a finer sense of the fitness and unfitness of things or gave more attention to details than the apostle Paul in his epistles.

The words "our brother" are translated in the margin "the brother." Either translation is correct. "The brother" is the strictly literal rendering of the words and corresponds with a number of interesting passages found elsewhere in the New Testament. In Rom. xvi: 23 toward the end of a long list of personal greetings Paul includes the name of Quartus "the brother." A descriptive phrase is added to the names of nearly all those who are mentioned, as "Timothy my fellow worker, " "Gaius my host," "Erastus the treasurer of the city," etc. At the end he names "Quartus the brother." So also in 1 Cor. i: 1 we find "Sosthenes the brother" and in 1 Cor. xvi: 12 "Apollos the brother." There are a number of other instances where the phrase is found. It is notable as an example of the numerous words which the gospel has adopted and filled with new meaning and made current in the language of men.

Christianity took many current words and melted them down, as it were, like coins, and after giving them a new value and stamping them afresh put them in circulation again.

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ." The word saint means set apart to God's service, and partaking of God's holy character. The Christian ideal of sainthood is by far the highest the world has known. A Buddhist saint is one who most completely empties himself of desire and most completely reduces the elements of his personal life to the vanishing point. It is essentially an ascetic ideal. The Christian ideal of sainthood calls not for emptiness but fullness of being. Every power is developed but developed along ethical lines. Fullness of life, the realization of all our possibilities, individual and personal immortality, these are elements in Christian sainthood. But it is life in Christ and conformed to his life. It is realization of our possibilities in service to our fellowmen. It is personality as to expression of divine grace in its utmost energy working in and through an individual will. "Faithful brethren" may mean "believing brethren" or brethren who are constant, or steadfast. Here it probably means the latter. Belief or faith is of course implied. In fact the New Testament idea of faith includes endurance or steadfastness as an essential element. This is brought out in the parable of the sower, and in the teaching of Jesus in John viii: 31, in Hebrews vi: 9, and in many other places. It is really unnecessary to draw a sharp line of distinction between belief and steadfastness in an instance like the one before us. Steadfastness is no doubt the more prominent aspect of faith here, in the sense of faithfulness. But faithfulness is simply the quality which arises out of faith. One is cause, the other effect, and as is usual in the New Testament the cause and effect are regarded as co-existing or as implying each other.

"In Christ" is the phrase we have met so often in the epistle to the Ephesians and recalls us, at the outset, to the underlying thought in both epistles, and indeed everywhere in Paul's writings. Paul's exposition of the Christian life might all be taken as an expansion of the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John. John's Gospel was written later than Paul's epistles but in the latter as in the former Christ is presented as sustaining a vital and organic relation to all believers. They are in him and by virtue of their vital union with him, they are enabled to bear fruit and to abound in all Christian graces.

3. We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus,

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It is to be observed that at the end of the salutation in *verse 2* Paul says: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father," and not as in the King James Version with the addition "and the Lord Jesus Christ." It is not difficult to account for the insertion of the latter phrase by later copyists, since it was found so uniformly elsewhere in Paul's epistles. (See 1 Cor. i: 3; 2 Cor. i: 2; Gal. i: 3; Eph. i: 2; Phil. i: 2, etc.) But the best manuscript authority forbids the insertion of the phrase "and the Lord Jesus Christ" here. It is indeed a singular variation from Paul's usual custom. A possible explanation is that, since he proposes in the epistle to refute the false and disparaging view of Christ which was becoming current at Colossae, he felt that it would needlessly awaken the antagonism of his readers if he were to couple the name of Christ with that of God at the outset. Or, as has been suggested, his mind may have moved in the opposite direction. He might have felt a reluctance to mention Christ as separate from God at all, lest a wrong inference be drawn therefore by the false teachers. Certainly he emphasizes Christ's deity elsewhere in the epistle.

Thanksgiving for Their Progress in the Gospel and the Spread of the Truth. i:3-8

In *verse 3* there are two possible readings: "We give thanks to God the Father always about you when we pray," or as in the text, "praying always for you." The first reading seems more natural. In Eph. i: 16 is a similar expression which confirms this view. It is also here a perfectly proper and natural rendering of the Greek. Paul means to tell them that he is thankful to God for them always, and that the expression of his gratitude finds place in all his prayers.

"Having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus" reminds us again that Paul did not have personal knowledge of the Colossian church through residence or apostolic labors there. Epaphras brought word to him as to the church and he may have heard of it in other ways. "Faith in Christ Jesus" suggests that Christ is the element in which faith moves as in an atmosphere or element, or it implies the vital and organic union, as of a branch in the vine, or of a member of the

and of the love which ye have toward all the saints, 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard be-

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body. The analogy with Paul's usual teaching elsewhere makes it probable that the latter form of union is what is meant here. Dr. McLaren says: "Faith is sometimes spoken of in the New Testament as *toward* Jesus Christ, which describes that great act of the soul by its direction, as if it were a going out or flight of the man's nature to the true goal of all active being. It is sometimes spoken of as *on* Jesus Christ, which describes it as reposing on him as the end of all seeking, and suggests such images as that of a hand that leans or of a burden borne, or a weakness upheld by contact with him. But more sweet and great is the blessedness of faith considered as *in* him, as its abiding place and fortress home, in union with and indwelling in whom the seeking spirit may fold its wings, and the weak heart may be strengthened to lift its burden cheerily, heavy though it be, and the soul may be full of tranquillity and soothed into a great calm."

"And of the love which ye have toward all the saints" leads our minds to the inevitable manifestation of true faith in Christ. Paul describes the relation of faith to love elsewhere as "faith working through love" (Gal. v: 6). Again in Eph. vi: 23 he couples the two in another way: "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father," etc., on the Galatian passage faith is the energy and love is the instrument or medium by which it is exerted. In Ephesians love is referred back to its root which is faith. "Love with faith" means that form of love which springs from faith. In the passage before us love toward the saints is the other side, as it were, of faith in Christ. The two are inseparable in reality and are constantly associated in Paul's epistles.

"Because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens." This follows immediately after the preceding, with only a comma between, and is the occasion for a considerable division of sentiment as to the logical and grammatical connection. The sentence beginning in *verse 3* runs on through *verse 5* and beyond. The question is whether we are to connect this expression "because of the hope, etc., with *verse 3* and understand Paul to say "We give thanks . . . because of the hope, etc.," or to connect the expression with the

fore in the word of the truth of the [1]gospel, 6 which is come unto you; even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing, as *it*

[1]Gr. good tidings: and so elsewhere: see marginal note on Mt. 4. 23.

immediately preceding clause and read "the love which ye have toward all the saints, because of the hope, etc." Either of these readings is grammatically possible. It becomes then a question as to which of the two is more in harmony with the general sense of the passage and Paul's usual manner of speech. We may sum up the opposing views briefly. Some say it is unusual and unnatural for Paul to assign the future hope of the Christian as a motive to love. Love, it is urged, is the most unselfish of the graces and needs no such prop. Moreover, it is said that the words which follow "whereof ye heard before, etc.," referring to the Christian hope would be out of place if Paul had just used the hope itself as explaining why they loved. On the other side it is argued that the beginning of *verse 3* is too far away from the beginning of *verse 5* to make it seem natural to connect them so closely. Again Paul's thanksgiving is usually due to the spiritual state of his readers, not something apart from them. It is further urged that the expression "we give thanks" is never used in the New Testament with the Greek word here employed and translated because (*dia*). On the whole I am convinced that the second of the views named is the correct one. Hope and love react upon each other in many ways. Love quickens hope and no doubt hope stimulates love. There is a sublimated view of love which is unwilling to connect it in the remotest way with the hope of reward. The sufficient reply is that any alleged form of love which depends entirely upon the hope of heavenly reward thereby discredits itself and disproves its claim to be Christian love. Love springs up when faith is born in the heart. But to ignore the fact that all the graces are organically related and bound up together and react upon each other, is to fail to understand Christian character. Love cannot be hermetically sealed up and disjoined from faith and hope. When the Christian life is quickened at any one point it is quickened at all points. When hope grows bright love gains an added intensity. There is, therefore, nothing out of keeping with the facts of the spiritual life if Paul here speaks of the love of the Colossians toward all the saints because of the hope laid up for them.

doth in you also, since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in

"Laid up for you in the heavens." Hope is here regarded as objective. That is to say, it is not primarily the exercise of the grace of hope which is emphasized, but rather the object of the hope, the completed redemption hereafter which is now secure in heaven and awaiting them. At the same time the activity of hope as a grace in their hearts is necessarily implied in the reference to hope's object in the life to come. The love is stimulated, then, as they reflect upon the full and perfect redemption which awaits them. Hope as a present grace in action seizes its object by anticipation and love is renewed toward all the saints. The Messianic salvation is represented in various forms in the New Testament. In Matt. vi: 20 it is called a treasure; in 1 Pet. i: 4 it is an inheritance; and in Phil. iii: 20 it is spoken of as a citizenship. All these are forms of representation of the same thing which constitute the Christian hope. "Whereof ye heard before" reminds them of the gospel as it came to them and warns them against the misleading and dangerous philosophy by which they are now tempted to forsake the truth. "In the word of the truth of the gospel." This form of statement is no doubt intended to impress upon their minds the idea that the essential elements of the gospel are changeless. "The word of the truth" clearly conveys to them Paul's conviction that the gospel is not a variable, shifting thing. As one has said, it has a dogmatic element in it. It is not a speculative and tentative effort to find out the meaning of the world, difficult as men found it to break their old habit and receive it thus. It is a revelation brought to us, to which our souls respond and which in our experience of God's grace we find to be true.

"Which is come unto you; even as it is also in all the world." Here Paul shows them that they are identified with a universal movement. "In all the world" no doubt has in it something of the hyperbole. But Paul sees signs of the gospel's power in all parts of the world and he thus pointedly implies that these Colossians, should they turn away from this gospel, will forsake that which already has shown evidence of its universal destination among the races of men. They should think twice before turning their ears away from this word of truth and taking up with a mere transient philosophy.

truth; 7 even as ye learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on [1]our behalf, 8 who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

[1]Many ancient authorities read, your.

"Bearing fruit and increasing." Not only did this gospel show its power at first. It continues to exhibit that power in increasing fruitfulness. It was not exhausted by its early fruitfulness. This power was manifest also in these Colossians "since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth." In *verse 6* then there are several points; the gospel is an inner power, they bear fruit. It extends itself locally by increase. It reached the Colossians as a part of its world-conquering destiny. It is moving on to new victories. It has had a uniform development since the Colossians heard it.

"Even as ye learned of Epaphras." Epaphras seems to have been the preacher who founded the Colossian church. He is referred to in iv:12 and in Philemon verse 23. We know nothing of him except what we learn through Paul's references to him. He is here described as a "faithful minister" and also as "our beloved fellow-servant." It is quite possible that Epaphras was to a greater or less extent discredited by the false teachers at Colossae and that the Colossians were disposed to disregard the gospel of Epaphras. This would account for Paul's strong endorsement of him here. In Philemon verse 23 Epaphras is described by Paul as his "fellow prisoner." This would imply that he shared Paul's captivity. In the latter part of *verse 7* Paul refers to him as "a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf." This is the preferable reading although the King James Version reads "for you." It has been conjectured that Paul had sent Epaphras to Colossae to preach in the first instance, or that in some way he had direct connection with the apostle in his evangelistic work. This is quite a probable explanation of Paul's expression "our behalf." His strong endorsement of Epaphras shows that he was familiar with his teaching and work. Epaphras is an abbreviation of Epaphroditus, a name found in Phil. ii: 25 and iv: 18. But there is no conclusive evidence that the two names represent the same person.

"Who also declared unto us." Epaphras had brought news to Paul regarding the condition of affairs at Colossae. "Who also de-

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowl-

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clared unto us your love in the Spirit." The Holy Spirit is the source of our love. Epaphras declared to Paul the love of the Colossians for him and for one another. This he recognized as a love inwrought by the Holy Spirit, and not merely ordinary human sympathy apart from the Gospel's transforming power.

Prayer for Their Spiritual Enlargement (1: 9-11).

The section of the epistle beginning with *verse 9* and extending through *verse 23* in a remarkable manner combines urgent appeal and tactful and winning manner of approach with strong and positive teaching. The prayer extends through *verse 12*. In *verse 13* the thought is continued without interruption, and a comprehensive outline of God's grace in Christ and of Christ's relations to the universe are set forth.

"For this cause we also." In view of what has been said in all the preceding section, viz., your faith and love, your growth and fruitbearing and the spread of the gospel over the world. "Since the day we heard it." Paul's prayer was the echo of their faith as it were. Instantly when the news came Paul began to pray for them and his prayer continued. He does not mean of course that he never for an instant ceased to make request for them but rather "do not cease" in the sense that he kept returning to them in his prayers. Continually he kept them in mind as a suitable object of prayer and constantly recurred to them.

"To pray and make request for you." These two words bring out the more general and the more specific aspects of prayer. "To pray" is to worship God in its more comprehensive meaning while "to make request" indicates that his desire for them is not merely good will toward them, or affectionate yearning for their spiritual welfare in a general way. He proceeds to indicate that in making request for them he has in mind very definite needs which he specifies in the verses which follow. It is clear from these forms of petition when we compare them with what follows, that the prayer itself is a forecast of the argument of the epistle as a whole. Paul has very definite teaching in mind. He would first prepare the soil

edge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 to walk worthily of the Lord [1]unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good

[1]Or, unto all pleasing, in every good work bearing fruit and increasing, etc.

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of their hearts for it. God must act upon us and give us the proper spiritual attitude if the great truths of the kingdom are to make their proper appeal to us.

"Filled with the knowledge of his will." First of all Paul would have them to abound in knowledge. Error assailed them. Truth must meet it. The word here translated knowledge is often met with in the epistles of the captivity. It means thorough knowledge, and is, in the Greek, the simpler word for ordinary knowledge compounded with a preposition to indicate knowledge with richer contents. The conviction of the necessity of thorough knowledge of Christianity grew and deepened apparently in the apostle's mind toward the latter part of his career. For we find it emphasized in many striking ways in the epistles of the captivity. "Of his will" suggests, however, that Paul is not thinking here so much of the knowledge of God's nature, as of his revealed will. To him the most important aspect of knowledge was not that which we call metaphysical but rather the practical. To him the passion for righteousness, or a life of obedience to God was so deep and abiding that he was little swayed by the mere thirst of knowledge for its own sake. In *verse 6* he has already spoken of their knowledge in another connection: "since ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth." This refers to their conversion. In the passage now before us he desires that the proper and necessary outcome of this early knowledge of God's grace may become manifest in their growth and conduct. "In all spiritual wisdom and understanding." In Eph. i: 8 we read "in all wisdom and prudence." The three words, wisdom, prudence, understanding, are interesting to the Christian for several reasons. One is the use of them in Greek philosophy. Aristotle says that wisdom (*sophia*) is the most general word of the three and means a knowledge of first principles as well as of particulars. Prudence (*phronesis*) means practical knowledge, while understanding (*sunesis*) means critical knowledge, penetration or insight. (See Abbott Commentary on Colossians, p. 202). In general these distinctions hold in the spiritual sphere. It is to be observed, therefore, that the

distinction so often made between faith and knowledge does not hold. Faith is a form of knowledge. Religion is not mere feeling, much less blind belief. It rather awakens all the powers of our intellectual being. These powers are exercised under a spiritual motive and toward spiritual objects. But the nature of the mental activity itself is not different from that which is exercised toward the objects of nature. It is a false demand therefore which would eliminate knowledge from Christianity. Of course it is equally false when Christianity so called takes the form of a dead intellectual system. The knowledge of his will is Paul's ideal, and no other kind of knowledge answers to the Christian conception of knowledge. It is thus the union of truth and life, of religion and theology, of faith and doctrine, which is necessary to the New Testament ideal. A dead orthodoxy and vague mysticism are equally foreign to the New Testament range of ideas.

"To walk worthily of the Lord." Their walk being in the Lord and through his grace and power is a reflection of these qualities in him. There should be a correspondence between their walk and this glorious Lord. "Unto all pleasing." Here the suggestion is that in every act there is to be a reference to God, so that in every way and in all things they are to please him. This lifts religion out of the sphere of mere ritual and mere belief of the truths of a creed into the sphere of personal relations. Every act of the Christian is directed upward, and draws its motive and incentive from the consciousness that it is "under the eye and in the strength of God." The word here translated "pleasing" was sometimes used in classical Greek in an unfavorable sense, like the word "obsequiousness." But like many other Greek words it is in the New Testament endowed with a far higher and wholly worthy meaning.

"Bearing fruit in every good work." Every kind of fruit-bearing is the natural expression of life in Christ. The spiritual power which enters the soul in conversion is so radical and deep that it revolutionizes the entire being and starts every natural gift and attribute into new and fruitful activity. All the outward relations of a man are affected by the inward change.

"And increasing in the knowledge of God." In *verse 9* he has already prayed that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will. It is possible to translate here as in the text. But "by the

work, and increasing [1]in the knowledge of God; 11 [2]strengthened [3]with all power, according to the might of his glory, unto all [4]patience

[1]Or, by. [2]Gr. made powerful. [3]Or, in. [4]Or, stedfastness.

knowledge of God" is equally admissible as a rendering of the clause. In view of *verse 9*, and its emphasis upon the knowledge of the will of God as well as upon the fullness of the knowledge prayed for, it seems more fitting to understand here an addition to the preceding thought rather than a practical repetition of it. "Bearing fruit and increasing by the knowledge of God" is therefore the preferable rendering. Thus the end of knowledge is obedience and fruitbearing. This reflects, as in so many other instances in these epistles of the captivity, the vital connection between truth and life in Paul's teaching. The aim of knowledge is the fulfillment of the Christian ideal. If the rendering of the text before us is retained an equally important truth is suggested, viz., that fruit-bearing in practical Christian activity always leads to an increase in the knowledge of God. The discovery of truth then is not a matter of the intellect merely, it is also a matter of the will, indeed of the whole being. We must do in order to know.

"Strengthened with all power." The word "all" occurs no less than five times in *verses 9 to 11*, although in one instance the Greek word is translated "every" instead of "all" (*verse 10*, "every good work"). "All power" here may and probably does mean "every kind" or "form of power," referring to the various kinds of strength required for the performance of Christian duty. It if be taken as meaning "all power" in the sense of "all necessary power," or inward reinforcement, it comes practically to the same thing. Fulness of spiritual energy as well as fullness of knowledge is the Christian ideal.

"According to the might of his glory" gives the measure or standard of power according to which we are to be strengthened. This does not mean "according to God's glorious power" but according to the might which he has manifested in the love which redeems us. His glory is expressed in his redeeming grace. The power matches the love and it is a gift to us which corresponds at all points with the necessities of our exalted calling. The Christian is required to do the impossible when regarded merely from the standpoint of the ordinary

and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks unto the Father, who made [1]us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in

[1]Some ancient authorities read, you.

human power of achievement. A power is ministered to him, however, which is according to the might of God's glory. He gathers us up into the mighty energies of his own redemptive purpose and we share it with him.

"Unto all patience and longsuffering with joy." The word here translated "patience" means literally "endurance." Endurance has a richer content than patience as ordinarily understood. Patience waits for its object or endures its suffering without complaint. Endurance suggests a more active state of mind. It is rather steadfastness in the pursuit of an object. Paul's prayer is that the Colossians may hold themselves steadily to their task as Christians, may exhibit stability of purpose and press on toward the goal. "Longsuffering" introduces the idea of patient submission to any trial or suffering which they may encounter in their pursuit of the Christian ideal. "With joy" is a further and crowning description of the spirit in which they are to wage their Christian warfare. The Christian life is not passive merely; it is not simply longsuffering. It is also active and aggressive. It is steadfast endurance or constancy in the pursuit of its object. Its constancy and its patience again are not merely a stoic hardening of the spirit. It is rather a joyous and triumphant sense of power to overcome and win the goal. In these words "with joy" we have the climax of Paul's prayer which most fittingly merges in the words of thanksgiving which follow.

THEIR ENLARGEMENT TO BE REALIZED THROUGH AN ATTITUDE OF THANKFULNESS TO GOD FOR CONVERTING GRACE (1: 12-14).

"Giving thanks unto the Father," etc. *Verses 12 to 14* return to the foundations of their spiritual life on the basis of which the enlargement already prayed for was to be realized. The mood in which their Christian calling is to be pursued is one of thankfulness to God, of humility and praise for the abounding grace which had come to them through Christ. Three blessings are mentioned as the occasion for their thanksgiving in this and the following verse. The first was that they had been made worthy to partake of the Christian inheri-

light; 13 who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; 14 in whom we

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tance; the second, they had been delivered out of the power of darkness; and third, they had been translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love.

"Who made us meet," etc. The word here translated "meet" does not mean "worthy," but rather competent, sufficient, fit, able. God had qualified them to share in the inheritance. "To be partakers of the inheritance." Literally this is "made us fit for a share of the inheritance," or "the allotted portion of the inheritance." The underlying thought is taken from the Old Testament. The land of Canaan was allotted to the various tribes. A portion was assigned to each. So here the suggested figure conveys the thought that Christians are alloted their portion in the eternal inheritance. "In light." In the next verse the power of darkness is referred to and here by anticipation the kingdom of light is introduced by way of contrast. It will be recalled that in Ephesians the contrast between light and darkness is strongly emphasized. The reference is to moral and spiritual rather than mere intellectual light and darkness, although as usual in the New Testament all three are included. "The inheritance of the saints in light," then, means the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

"Who delivered us out of the power of darkness." The word "delivered" means to draw to oneself, to rescue. The "power" of darkness is more exactly translated the "authority" of darkness. The word translated power here is used a number of times in the New Testament in the sense of authority. The word itself does not convey the idea of tyranny or oppression, but the connection in which it is here found makes it clear that such an oppressive authority had ruled over their lives prior to their faith in Christ. "The power of darkness" here is of course the power of sin and the sinful principle which held them. The kingdom of darkness was indeed the sphere in which they had lived and its evil authority governed them.

"And translated us." The classic use of the word translate had reference to the transplanting of whole tribes or nations from one country to another. Commentators are divided as to whether this classic meaning is in the apostle's mind here. The general thought

have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: 15 who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in him were

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conveyed is quite analogous to such transplanting, and it is a most natural interpretation. To translate, then, is to bear across and set down in a new place. In the spiritual sense this is just what had taken place with these Christians. They had been borne across from the realm of darkness to the kingdom of God. "The kingdom of the Son of his love." "The Son of his love" is a very beautiful expression which may mean the Son who is the expression and manifestation of his love, or the Son who is the object of his love. The latter is the preferable interpretation. The two meanings are of course not opposed to each other, but rather go together. "The Son of his love," however, if understood as meaning the Son who is the special object of his love would serve to emphasize to the minds of his readers the apostle's overwhelming sense of God's grace and love for them. God's love for Christ would then become the standard or measure of his love for them, since he had shown his love to them by translating them into the kingdom of the Son of his love.

"In whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." (Compare Eph. i: 7ff.) Paul has been dealing with the grace of God in general. As in Ephesians he traces all back to an eternal purpose of God, so here, without dwelling on the eternal nature of the act, he has nevertheless traced all to his grace. This, however, is not a sufficient statement of the Christian truth. It is only as that grace is shown to have come to us through Christ that its full Christian meaning is understood. The initial act was the remission of our sins, and that remission was in and through Christ. Moreover that act of remission was also the act of redemption. Redemption and remission here stand in opposition and are equivalent to each other.

Christ's Universal Relations Defined (1: 15-23.)

From *verse 15 to verse 23* the apostle gives us the central doctrinal teaching of this epistle. Over against the false teachers who were disposed to worship angels he sets forth the true place of Christ as the head of all angelic beings, and of creation physical and spiritual. The apostle has led his readers up to this teaching about Christ in a most natural manner. First he prayed for their spiritual enlarge-

ment. Second he stirred their sense of gratitude for the grace of God which has rescued and redeemed them. Third, he pointed out the agency of Christ in their redemption. This leads him naturally to a further definition of Christ's Person and of his place in the redeeming purpose and plan of God. In the nine verses which follow we have the most comprehensive and exhaustive statement of Paul's estimate of Jesus Christ to be found anywhere in his epistles.

"Who is the image of the invisible God." The present tense here suggests that Christ as the image of God is not regarded merely in his pre-existent state. The word "is" declares a permanent and abiding truth. Christ is in his essential nature the image of God. He is the forthputting and outgoing of the divine wisdom and power, the medium for the expression and communication of God to his creatures. Some have thought that the first part of this description of Christ down to *verse 18* refers to him in his pre-incarnate state and that from *verse 18 to verse 23* reference is made to him as incarnate. But this distinction cannot be found in the language. Certainly the use of the present tense *is*, requires us to include Christ's present state of exaltation, and the various statements made regarding his nature and work cover all phases and all periods of his activity, before, during, and after, his earthly life. It is evident, therefore, that the apostle seeks to set forth what Christ is in himself essentially, and always.

"The image." This word (Greek, *eikoon*), means an image, a figure, a likeness, and is used in many places in the New Testament. Another word of similar import which may be translated likeness (Greek, *homoiooma*) differs from the word here. The latter word means outward visible conformity to or correspondence with another. The word here employed carries with it the further idea of representation or derivation, and manifestation. One thing may resemble another without having any essential connection with it. "Image" means more than this. Christ is the outward expression and manifestation of God because of his essential relations to God. The expression in Heb. i: 3 is closely parallel. He is "the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance." The word translated "image" in the Hebrew passage, however, is not the same as the word used here. In Hebrews the word refers to the tool employed for cutting or engraving, and from this comes the meaning, that which is cut or engraved or stamped. Thus the word in Hebrews

all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities

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conveys the idea of image even more vividly than the word here employed.

"The invisible God." Of course, this expression brings out clearly the contrast between the seen and the unseen. The "image" is God manifest in Christ, but he remains the invisible God. John declares that no one has seen God at any time, but that the only begotten Son has declared him. Thus the invisible God became visible in the incarnation.

It is interesting to note that two words which are very prominent in the New Testament were also employed by Philo the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria. One is the word logos, which we find in John's writings, the other is the word image found here. In the speculations of Philo, however, as in philosophy generally, these terms were vague and variable in meaning. The term logos, for example, sometimes seems to represent a person in the Godhead, and at other times an impersonal principle. But in all instances of its use Philo comes far short of the idea of God represented in the Person of Jesus. Philo was dealing with an intellectual principle, the divine reason, rather than a divine personal Redeemer. The term itself, as well as the idea as employed by Philo, while falling far below the New Testament teaching as to Christ, is a suggestive instance of man's effort to discover God by means of the unaided intellect. The idea of God remained dim and uncertain until Jesus fixed its meaning for mankind. All that speculation could do before or since has been to approximate more or less closely the idea of God as revealed by Jesus. We really know God only as he has revealed him to us.

"The firstborn of all creation." "Firstborn" was a term in very common use among the Jews. Israel is sometimes called God's firstborn. The term is applied in Heb. i: 6 to the Messiah and it seems to have been a recognized designation of the Messiah among the Jews. (See Ps. lxxxix: 27.) What does this word "firstborn" mean? In John we have the declaration that Christ is the "only begotten of the Father." Here the same idea of origin through birth is employed in order to express Christ's relations to creation. The connection in which the word is here placed will assist us in finding

or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him;
17 and he is before all things, and in him all things [1]consist. 18 And

[1]That is, hold together.

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its meaning. "Firstborn of all creation" might, if taken alone, suggest that Christ's origin was the same in kind as that of created things. The difference would be simply that he came first in the order of creation. This is a possible interpretation of the words. But the next verse very clearly excludes it, since it declares that in him, through him, and unto him, all things have been created. Thus he is clearly set apart from creation, over against it indeed, as belonging to a different order. "Firstborn of all creation" then cannot possibly mean that he was himself a creature. There is indeed a contrast between two modes of origin here. He was born while creation was made, or created. It is not in our province here to attempt to reconcile the idea of the eternal existence of Christ with the other idea of a birth or begetting. Theology has had much to say on the subject, and the idea of an "eternal generation" has been urged. It is sufficient to say that both Paul and John combine the two ideas without betraying any sense of contradiction. He is the only begotten, the firstborn, and yet he existed before any created thing came into existence, or any finite temporal relations were established. We may sum up the meaning of the word "firstborn" then as follows: 1. Christ did not come into existence by creation. 2. He existed prior to creation. 3. There is implied in this, although not expressly stated until in the following verses, his sovereignty over creation.

"Of all creation" might be translated "of every creature." There is no material difference in the meaning. In the one case creation is regarded as a whole, in the other in its separate parts.

"For in him were all things created." In this verse, three prepositions are used to express Christ's relations to the universe. These are "in" (Greek *en*), "through" (Greek *dia*), and "unto" (Greek *eis*). The apostle adds two further statements in the next verse, evidently intended to complete the view as to Christ. These are that Christ is "before" all things and that in him "all things consist." The aim of this epistle evidently called for a very accurate and comprehensive explanation of Christ's relations to the universe. In the background is a false teaching which failed in its estimate of Christ. What then

he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-

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is meant by the statement that "in him were all things created?" It will be recalled that the phrase "in him" is found repeatedly in Ephesians to describe the believer's union with Christ. The spiritual creation takes place "in him." The same phrase is now applied to creation at large. Every created thing and the creation regarded as a whole came into being "in him." Each form of being was shaped in accordance with his design, the ideal which existed beforehand in him. The meaning of the universe, therefore, can be fully understood only as we understand him. He was its "conditioning cause," and prescribed it in all its parts. "Created," here as elsewhere in the New Testament, refers to the divine act calling into being that which did not exist before.

"In the heavens and upon the earth." This begins an elaborate list of created objects. The apostle thus specifies in order to make impressive the dignity and power of Christ. "In the heavens" comprehends all things in the regions above, and "upon the earth" describes things below. It is purposely comprehensive and inclusive. Yet this description even might be taken as referring only to physical and visible things. He therefore adds "things visible and things invisible." Not only material things but personal and spiritual beings are included.

"Whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers." This list reminds us of that in Ephesians i: 21 . It is, however, not identical either in the names themselves or in the order of their enumeration. There the language is "all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion." The word thrones does not appear in the Ephesian passage. The Greek word there translated "power" is absent from the passage here although we have here the plural form "powers" which represents the Greek word translated "authority" in Ephesians. In Ephesians the nouns are all singular while here they are all plural. All these variations indicate that Paul is not here setting forth a doctrine of angelic hierarchies, wherein orderly ranks and authorities are to be distinguished. His references to thrones, dominions, etc., seem to have been made rather from the point of view of the false teachers. His aim is to answer them. As a Jew no doubt Paul believed in the existence of angels but it was a great perversion of the

doctrine to place angels in the seat of Christ and worship them. He says to these false teachers in effect: "It matters not what be the rank or dignity or power of your angelic beings, Christ is above them all. He is their supreme Lord and Creator." The false philosophy which came to full expression in later centuries, and which seems to have been present in the Colossian community when Paul wrote, placed God far away from the world and imagined a host of intermediate beings between God and man. Paul brushes all these away and asserts that God and man are united in Christ and we need no other Mediator, or Redeemer or Lord.

"All things have been created through him, and unto him." The same preposition "through" is used in a number of other places to express Christ's relation to creation. See John. i: 3, Heb. i: 2, and 1 Cor. viii: 6. Christ is the medium of creation, through him as it were, the act of creation passed. God is thought of as the ultimate or originating cause of all things and Christ as the instrumental or mediate cause. "Unto him" carries the description yet further. Christ is not only the agent through whom the universe came into being; he is also its goal. It moves toward him. Its outcome is to be what he chooses. It was constituted for the realization of his purpose. Its forward movement thus takes all its meaning from its relation to him.

"He is before all things." The present tense is significant. It does not read "he was before all things," which would be far less impressive. "He is" reminds us of his saying "Before Abraham was born, I am" (Jno. viii: 58). It is the timeless present which conveys the idea of eternal existence. Here again Christ is set over against creation by way of contrast. He is "before" all things, hence he is not among the "all things" of creation. He *is* before all things since his mode of existence was not subject to the ordinary relations of time and space. "And in him all things consist." The word consist conveys a two-fold meaning. The first is that of coherence. In him all things cohere or hold together. The other meaning is unity. In him all things are united. Of course the two phases of meaning are very closely connected. But they are not identical. Things might cohere and yet in a sense remain discordant and irreconcilable. The universe as constituted in Christ, on the contrary, has at its heart a fundamental unity and harmony. It is, as it were,

a beautiful symphony. All the parts contribute something to the total effect. He is the bond of the universe.

Thus Paul outlines his doctrine of Christ's person in relation to created things. It suggests the important truth that religion and above all the Christian religion must always take into account the origin and end of things if it is to remain. Inevitably the necessity arises for explaining the ultimate meaning of the world, because the religious outcome is dependent upon God's control of the world and the fulfillment of his purpose in and through it. The effort to limit our explanations of religion to the simpler elementary facts of experience always fails in the end. And this for two reasons. One is that we always want to know more about our Redeemer than the bare fact that he redeems us. The other is that opposing or irreligious views of the world always compel us to give the larger meaning of our faith. The doctrine of Christ's person here and elsewhere in the New Testament received its development in this way. He can be our Redeemer and Lord because he is Lord of creation and guides and controls the ongoing of the world.

"And he is the head of the body, the church." It will be noted that there is a parallel between Christ's relations to the physical universe and the spiritual. He is the firstborn of all creation, through whom the world came into being, as we have just seen. Here is a return to Paul's favorite figure of the head and the body. Christ is head of the church. This means that he governs it, is the source of life to it, and its bond of unity. The unity between the head and the physical body is a most fitting symbol for Christ's relation to his church. The body is emphasized because the false teachers depreciated matter in all its forms. "Who is the beginning." This is to be understood in connection with the following clause, "the firstborn from the dead." The beginning here evidently refers to Christ's place as the originator of spiritual life in God's kingdom. The incarnation lifted humanity to a new level. It originated a new order of men. It was the beginning of a new spiritual creation. In 1 Cor. xv: 20f Christ is described as the first fruits of them that slept. Hence his resurrection was the full revelation of the new quality of life which he was to impart to the new humanity. "The firstborn from the dead" corresponds with "the firstborn" of all creation in the *fifteenth verse*. We have seen in connection with Ephesians 1: 20ff. that Paul

born from the dead; [1]that in all things he might have the pre-emi-

[1]Or, that among all he might have, etc.

makes the new Christian order of things start chiefly from the resurrection of Christ. The whole of the life and power of Christians, the whole Christian movement takes its departure and obtains its peculiar character from the resurrection of Christ. Christian history is, as it were, the continuation and expansion of Christ's resurrection. Of course Paul does not regard the resurrection as a separate and isolated event apart from that which went before. It is rather as the climax and completion of Christ's redeeming work that he regards it. In Romans i: 4 he says that Christ was "declared (determined, marked out) to be the Son of God with power, * * * by the resurrection of the dead." In Acts xiii: 33 Paul declares that the resurrection of Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament saying, "This day have I begotten thee." All this helps us to appreciate how very close the resurrection of Christ stands to the whole meaning and value of Christianity. The effort so often made to assign it a merely secondary place in the interest of a view which makes everything of the incarnate earthly life, is a reversal of the New Testament way of looking at the matter. There is no effort anywhere in the New Testament to make little of the life apart from the death and resurrection of Christ. But clearly the apostles did not separate the one from the other. They regarded the earthly career of Jesus as a whole. It reached its highest point in the resurrection. From this as its starting point the Christian movement swept out into power among the nations.

"That in all things he might have the pre-eminence." This phrase connects what precedes and what follows in the apostle's thought. From *verse 15* to the expression "from the dead" in *verse 18* he has described the primacy or pre-eminence of Christ in a number of particulars. In the statement that he was "the firstborn from the dead" the climax is reached. His place as spiritual cause and source of life in his people is thus brought out. This rounds out the general thought of his pre-eminence. The expression means literally "that he might be first," or "might hold the first place." The reference is not, however, to priority in time alone, but to superiority in power and office or function. This appears in the language which follows. His

nence. 19 [1]For it was the good pleasure *of the Father* that in him

[1]Or, for the whole fulness of God was pleased to dwell in him.

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pre-eminence finds explanation in the fact that the divine fullness dwelt in him.

"For it was the good pleasure *of the Father*." "Of the Father" is in italics indicating that it is absent from the Greek text. No subject of the verb translated "it was the good pleasure," is given. It may be translated "it was the good pleasure," without further indication of subject, or "all the fullness of God was pleased," etc. But the translation as given in the text is the simplest way to understand the words. There is no material difference in the meaning, no matter which of the possible renderings is adopted.

"All the fulness." We have had this word fullness in Ephesians i: 10, 23; iii: 19; iv: 13, and it is found in a number of other places in the New Testament. It means that which fills, or that which completes the process of filling, or that which is filled, or that by which completeness or fullness is attained. The first meaning is chiefly intended here, that is, the fullness of God. That which constitutes the divine fullness dwelt in Christ. The totality of the divine nature was pleased to fill him. The reference is to Christ simply without distinction as to his incarnate and pre-incarnate state. In Phil. ii: 7 it is declared that "he emptied himself," and in some sense there was a suspension of the divine activities in the incarnation. But Christ did not divest himself of his essential nature when he became flesh. The word "dwell" brings out the permanence of the abode of the "fulness" in Christ. It was not a transient or temporary coming of the "fulness" upon him. The language declares rather his essential nature as possessing the fullness perpetually.

"And through him to reconcile all things unto himself." The reconciliation of all things to God was the end and aim of the incarnation. "Through him" corresponds with the same expression in *verse 16*. He is the medium and agent of reconciliation, just as he was the medium and agent of creation. "All things" is another comprehensive and all inclusive expression, like a number of others in the passage before us. Paul would bring out the universality and completeness of Christ's work in all possible ways. At the end of the verse he

should all the fulness dwell; 20 and through him to reconcile all things [1]unto [2]himself, having made peace through the blood of his

[1]Or, into him. [2]Or, him.

returns to the thought of universal reconciliation and specifies the earth and the heavens as included therein.

"Having made peace through the blood of his cross." The true reconciliation to God takes place through the cross. The false teachers probably insisted upon other modes of reconciliation, such as painful ascetic practices and efforts to conquer the physical nature. The apostle, over against these, insists upon the only true method and means of reconciliation. "Whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens." Christ's reconciliation is thus given a universal character. These words raise a very difficult question, which is, how far we are to understand the effects of Christ's atoning work to have extended. Of course there is no special difficulty connected with the expression "things upon the earth." But what is meant by "things in the heavens?" Does Christ also reconcile these? Some have understood the words to apply to intelligent creatures only. Of these some include only the fallen and others unfallen angels. As to fallen angels, however, it is merely an inference, and that scarcely in accord with the general teaching of Scripture, which affords no warrant for the view that fallen angels are reconciled to God through Christ's death. Others exclude fallen angels and claim that unfallen angels are reconciled. There are two ways in which this is held. One way is to suppose an increase of knowledge and bliss to have been secured for the pure angels through Christ's mediatorial work. The other way is to suppose that the pure angels are not reconciled to God but that they are reconciled to man through Christ's death. That is to say, as man is thus reconciled to God, the angels who had looked with disfavor upon sinful men are now reconciled to them and harmony is restored as between them and men. This view, however, seems to be somewhat strained. It appears more like a plausible supposition to avoid a difficulty than a natural interpretation of the words. Another view understands the words "all things in the heavens" as applying only to the physical universe. This would be on the general supposition that nature was affected by man's sin and that Christ's work extends, in its results,

cross; through him, *I say*, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens. 21 And you, being in time past alienated and ene-

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as far as transgression extended. This view undoubtedly has support from other teachings of Scripture. (See Romans viii: 19-22.)

Another possible view, so far as the language is concerned, is that Paul is simply reciting in these words the phrases employed by the false teachers. They held elaborate schemes for the union and reconciliation of the universe to God, schemes which failed to recognize the work of Christ as Mediator. Paul would thus remind them that reconciliation brought about through Christ was comprehensive and universal. Nothing of value in any possible plan of reconciliation was wanting in the mediation of Christ. This interpretation does not require that we understand the language of Paul as teaching necessarily any actual reconciliation of "things in the heavens." The statement is simply hypothetical on his part adapted to meet the view of the false teachers. Able commentators accept the last view.

The general tenor of the passage seems to accord best, however, with the idea that Paul means to teach some sort of general reconciliation of "all things," including those in the heavens, through the death of Christ. May it not be that he is here thinking of the unity of creation as the work of Christ? What affects one part of it affects every part. Sin disturbs the whole moral order and it affects physical creation as well. Disorder, and indeed chaos, has disturbed the domain of God where free creatures have abused their freedom. To reconcile is to restore order, to enforce the divine law, to remove discords. The process of reconciliation, therefore, is here regarded in its broader and more general meaning of restoration to order and subjection to the will of God. The passage does not warrant belief in the ultimate salvation of all men. It does not teach that angels are reconciled in the usual sense of redemption through faith in Christ. It does, however, warrant the view that there is unity and universality in the reconciliation brought about through the death of Christ. He is universal Lord. His dominion as Reconciler and Redeemer is co-extensive with his domain as Creator and Sustainer of all things.

"And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind." "Alienated" here means estranged from God. Paul describes the estrangement as due to the condition of their own minds. It is not

mies in your mind in your evil works, 22 yet now [1]hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprovable before him: 23 if so be that ye continue

[1]Some ancient authorities read ye have been reconciled.

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that they are described here as banished from God by God's act, but estranged from God, alienated from him in their own minds.

"In your evil works" is a further description of the state into which they were brought by their spiritual alienation. The state of enmity and alienation showed itself in their evil works. Evil works became the sphere in which they moved as the result of their alienation from God.

"Now hath he reconciled." Paul means by the word "now" not the immediate present, but the present dispensation or order of things. The process now going on is one of reconciliation through Christ. The reconciliation of the Colossians was one example of that reconciliation.

"In the body of his flesh." This phrase seems especially designed to emphasize the physical fact of Christ's death. One phase of the false teaching at Colossae seems to have been that reconciliation to God was affected by mediators, such as angels, who were without bodies. These purely spiritual beings were supposed to possess peculiar power of attaining to fellowship with God because they had no bodies. The type of philosophy which regarded matter as inherently evil, was quite widespread in New Testament times. Some writers, indeed, have attempted to make it appear that Paul and John shared this view. But there is no ground whatever for the supposition. On the contrary both of them put strong emphasis upon the physical side of Christ and his work. In neither one of them is there any teaching which lends color to the theory that they viewed man's body as being sinful because material. Man's sinfulness in the writings of both Paul and John is regarded as due to moral, not physical causes. The body is affected, and becomes the sphere in which the sinful principle operates, but not because it is material.

"To present you." This phrase has been interpreted as a sacrificial expression suggesting that God would present them to himself as an offering is presented for sacrifice. But this scarcely seems appropriate since the "presentation" is the end of the reconciliation

in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the

and the result of Christ's sacrifice. It has also been understood as a figure based on the presentation of a bride to the bridegroom at a wedding. Yet another view regards it as a judicial term. To present one without fault means a complete acquittal. The word itself may be interpreted in this last sense or in the second sense named. It is doubtful, however, whether either of the three figures was in Paul's mind. "To present," in its most general meaning, is all that is required here. The phrase indicates the purpose of God in the reconciliation.

"Holy and without blemish and unreprovable." "Holy" means consecrated or separated to God. "Without blemish" means without outward mark of imperfection, like a fau'tless animal for sacrifice. "Unreprovable" means that the faultlessness was such that not even God could find any occasion for blame. Thus the three aspects of perfection supplement each other. Those who are outwardly consecrated to God become gradually pure within and without blemish in character, and this finally results in the approval as perfect by God himself. This then is the moral and spiritual outcome of the work of Christ. He reconciles men to God. The reconciliation becomes in them a spiritual process by which they are transformed. The outcome is spotless moral perfection and beauty. Paul's moral passion is equal to his evangelistic zeal. He longs for the conversion of men, but he longs equally for their moral perfection.

"If so be that ye continue." These words and those which follow express the conditions on which God's purpose for them is to be realized. Paul does not here express a doubt as to their continuance in the faith or even imply it. The words may be taken, indeed, as meaning simply "seeing that," or "in view of the fact that," etc. But they are best understood as expressing simply the condition on their part necessary to the fulfillment of the divine purpose in them.

"In the faith" means in your vital union with Christ. "The faith" rarely, if ever, means in the New Testament the creed, or acceptance of a creed. Faith, wi h Paul, was a personal relation of trust in Jesus Christ.

hope of the [1]gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister.

[1]Gr. good tidings: and so elsewhere; see marginal note on Mt. 4. 23.

"Grounded and stedfast." Little comment is needed upon these words. "Foundationed" and "firm" are equivalent terms. If well based there would be stability, and continuance in the faith requires both. "And not moved away" states negatively the same idea of stability and security. The form of the verb suggests the process as going on. The evil influences are a constant menace. The resistance of believers must be a continuous process. Otherwise they will be gradually swept away from their true foundation in Jesus Christ. "From the hope of the gospel" refers to the hope mentioned in *verse 5* as "laid up for you in the heavens." The fulfillment of these necessary conditions will enable them to realize the hope.

"Which ye heard." When they were converted. The gospel had shown its power in and through them. He appeals to their first experience as a means of steadying them in the Christian life. "Which was preached in all creation under heaven." This is simply a strong expression for the universality of the gospel, and its rapid spread among men. "Whereof I Paul was made a minister." The call and appointment of the apostle as a representative of the gospel would emphasize its importance and impress his readers with its value. Throughout this and the Ephesian epistle Paul's sense of the universality of the gospel and the necessity for its widespread proclamation constantly appears. To him Christianity is without meaning save as a missionary religion. It is very difficult for the modern man to appreciate how far Paul was in advance of the thought of that age in this matter. Religions were usually national, and the gods worshipped were limited in the area of their influence. Even Jews who had the knowledge of the true God had great difficulty in rising to the level of Paul's teaching as to the world-wide gospel. In his earlier epistles the evidences of his controversy with the Jews on this point everywhere abound. Here that controversy has been won, and we hear scarcely an echo of it. But in many ways the great truth comes into the foreground that the gospel of Christ is for the human race, and that any other view of it is against its very genius. Christianity is missionary or it is nothing.

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for

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PAUL'S MINISTRY AND SUFFERINGS FOR THEM ARE ACCORDING TO A DIVINE DISPENSATION (1: 24-25.)

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake." Paul has just declared that he was appointed a minister of the gospel which was spreading abroad over the earth. But he at once returns to the fact that for the present he is a prisoner enduring sufferings rather than an aggressive apostle carrying the gospel to the destitute parts of the world. But even so he rejoices in his sufferings because they are endured "for your sake." It is because his ministry including his sufferings could be used for their spiritual progress that he rejoiced. The next expression has been variously understood: "And fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ." These remarkable words have seemed to some to suggest that Paul placed his own sufferings by the side of those of Christ on the cross in order to complete his work of atonement. This view cannot be correct. Christ's atoning work is not described as "afflictions" in the New Testament, and besides it is everywhere regarded as sufficient and complete in itself. Roman Catholic writers try to find in the passage a support for their doctrine of merit, according to which the sufferings of the saints are a treasury of the church from which indulgences may be granted. But, leaving aside these views, what do the words mean? The following possible answers may be given: afflictions imposed by Christ upon us; afflictions borne for Christ by us; afflictions which are like the afflictions borne by Christ; or, finally, afflictions which are borne by Christ himself. None of the first three meanings seems to be quite as natural and correct an understanding of the words at the last. Of these three the third is preferable, and gives a tenable sense. This would understand Paul as asserting simply that his sufferings were so similar to those of Christ, endured so completely in his spirit and for his ends, that they are called by him the sufferings of Christ. The objections to this interpretation are that it is not the most natural, although a possible rendering of the words, and that it overlooks Paul's favorite and constant practice of identifying himself and believers, in a mystic and spiritual union with Christ. That union in a very special manner is emphasized in

his body's sake, which is the church; 25 whereof I was made a minister, according to the [1]dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to fulfil the word of God, 26 *even* the mystery which hath been hid [2]for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested

[1]Or, stewardship. See 1 Cor. 9. 17.

[2]Or, from all ages, etc. Gr. from the ages and from the generations.

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this and the Ephesian epistle, and indeed in the immediate context. For in the next clause he speaks of the church as Christ's body. We conclude, therefore, that the words are to be taken in their most simple and obvious meaning. Christ is identified with his people, and their sufferings are also his. Paul on his part endures those afflictions of Christ for the sake of the church of Christ. The "afflictions" referred to are not the sufferings of Christ in his own person on the cross. These were complete and needed no addition from any source whatever. But the process of spiritual death and life goes on continually in the believer on earth. His life is "in Christ" and his sufferings are endured for Christ, and so completely is he identified with Christ that they are the sufferings also of Christ. That which is lacking in Christ's sufferings at any given time therefore is the remainder of sufferings necessary for the full establishment of God's kingdom and the perfection of God's people. Paul could rejoice in his own sufferings, then, because they were a means of promoting these glorious ends. They made him one with Christ in advancing God's kingdom on earth.

"Whereof I was made a minister," etc. Paul was made a minister of the church at Colossae becaus he was the apostle to all the Gentiles. "According to the dispensation of God." This is, literally, "according to the stewardship." The church is thought of as a household and Paul calls himself God's steward in this household entrusted with his affairs especially in the matter of preaching the truth to God's people. "To fulfil the word of God." This brings out more clearly what duties the steward is to perform. The meaning is that Paul is to carry forward the proclamation of the gospel, extend it as widely and declare it as fully as was possible for him. The expression does not mean to fulfil the word of prophecy.

to his saints, 27 to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may

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HIS AIM: TO PRESENT MEN PERFECT IN CHRIST. (I: 26-29.)

"Even the mystery which hath been hid." In Ephesians i: 9 we find reference to this mystery. As explained there the "mystery" means, not something difficult to understand, but something long concealed but now revealed. This point is especially emphasized here. It has been concealed from the "ages and generations," but it is now revealed to his saints.

"To whom God was pleased to make known." God's sovereign will was the moving cause of the disclosure of the mystery here as in Ephesians. "What is the riches of the glory of this mystery." This means not "the glorious riches of this mystery," as it is sometimes understood. That which is made known is the glory of the mystery, and the emphasis here is upon the wealth of the glory. The mystery is, as it were, laden with the divine glory, and it is this quality of it which has been made known. "Among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." The mystery has been revealed among the Gentile races. It has also been disclosed to men in their inner being. "Christ in you" is Christ in your hearts. "The hope of glory" sets forth the ground of our hope of future glory. We hope for the life in glory because the only cause equal to the task of producing the desired result, and bringing us actually to that future glory, is now operating in us. Christ within us is the beginning of the life in glory. The fact that he is now in us is the guarantee and pledge of the full realization in due time. In Ephesians i: 9-10 the "mystery" is described as God's purpose to "sum up" all things in Christ. In Eph. iii: 4-6 the "mystery" is set forth as consisting in in the fact that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body of Christ. This accords with the general aim of Ephesians which is to show the unity of all things in Christ. There is, of course, no contradiction to this here. It is simply another aspect of the same great truth. Christ unites Jews and Gentiles because he dwells in their hearts as their hope of glory.

present every man perfect in Christ; 29 whereunto I labor also, striving according to his working, which worketh in me [1]mightily.

[1]Or, in power.

In *verse 28* we have an example of what we may call the moral passion of the apostle. He was not simply an evangelist proclaiming certain saving truths about Christ and then passing on without further thought of the converts. He was filled with a consuming desire that they might go on to spiritual perfection. "Whom we proclaim" might indicate his evangelistic message. But he adds "admonishing every man." This means warning and exhortation of all kinds. "And teaching every man" carries on the thought. The gospel is not for the select few who are endowed with superior capacity for understanding it, as was the case with some of the prevailing forms of philosophy. "In all wisdom" puts added emphasis upon the thought. There was no esoteric gospel kept in reserve. The whole message was for every one who could or would receive it. Thus we may sum up what he says; he preaches a Person, Christ, not a philosophy; to every man, not a select few; in all wisdom, not omitting the deeper truths. The aim is "to present every man perfect in Christ." The word perfect here means brought to an end or to maturity. The kind of perfection is particularly seen in the qualifying words "in Christ." The Christian ideal of perfection is far above that of men who have not known the nature of Christianity. Perfection in Christ means a perfection attained through union with Christ, and which results in conformity to the type of perfection which Christ himself exemplified. The passion of Paul's life was this perfecting of men in accordance with this ideal.

In *verse 29* he describes the spirit in which he carries on his work which may well serve as a model for all spiritual workers. "Whereunto I labor also, striving," etc. He not only labors, but also strives or contends in his labors. The latter word refers to athletic contests where a man has an antagonist. There were foes in abundance. (See Eph. vi: 12; 1 Cor. ix: 25; Gal. iv: 11; 1 Tim. iv: 10.) The measure and manner of his labor and his striving are next mentioned: "according to his working, which worketh in me mightily" (Compare Eph. i: 19-23). The reference is not to the working of miracles but rather to the spiritual energy of the Spirit which fills him in his apostolic labors.

2 For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the

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HE LONGS THAT THEY MAY KNOW HIS STRIVINGS, AND THAT THEY MAY NOT BE LED ASTRAY BY FALSE TEACHING (II: 1-5).

"For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you." Since Paul is a prisoner and unable to devote himself to outward labors, these words can only refer to his spiritual strivings, his prayers for them and his deep longing for their spiritual development. Prayer is not a merely passive spiritual state. It enlists and puts into energetic exercise every power of the soul. (See James v: 16.) Prayer in a real sense is work. It is probable that by mentioning his intense desire for their spiritual welfare Paul is here seeking to justify himself in writing, or at least to make them understand why he who was unknown to them by face should send this epistle. "And for them at Laodicea." Laodicea was near Colossae and is mentioned in Rev. iii: 14ff, and because of the description of the church in the Revelation passage the adjective "Laodicean" has come to mean a state of spiritual lukewarmness. "And as many as have not seen my face in the flesh." Here again is clear evidence that Paul was unknown personally to his readers. But the form of expression implies that they did know of him as an apostle.

"That their hearts may be comforted." "Their hearts" shows that he has in mind not only the Colossians themselves but also all others at Laodicea and Hierapolis (see iv: 13), and in the circle to which these churches belonged. "May be comforted" might be rendered "may be encouraged" or "may be strengthened." One of the latter renderings is better than that of the text. The whole connection in which the words occur indicates their need of strengthening rather than comforting. There were false teachings by which they were in danger of being beguiled (see *verse* 4). They needed to be established in the truth. So we should render the words "may be strengthened." The next clause shows that a spiritual growth attends strengthening in the truth: "being knit together in love." The words "knit together" mean to cause to coalesce, or join together as of parts. "Knit together" is also a correct translation. The idea is clear. Paul desires that there should be first of all a spiritual unity "in love." If this prime condition was fulfilled there would

flesh; 2 that their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the [1]full assurance of understanding,

[1]Or, fulness.

be little danger of serious divisions caused by erroneous teachings. The unity of love is the best safeguard against the party spirit and unseemly wrangles over matters of doctrine.

But the result of this unity in love will manifest itself in an increase in knowledge. This appears in the next clause: "unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." The agreement is quite general that the words "full assurance" is a correct translation here, although in the margin "fulness" is given as an alternative reading. "Full assurance" gives a more appropriate meaning and suits the connection better. The word "understanding" means the faculty of discriminating or of judging. With these explanatory statements in mind we may express Paul's meaning as follows : "unto all the wealth of assured and confident judgment." The point especially brought out is clearness and confidence in judging. Too often we are shaken by plausible theories which assail the gospel. Our minds are dazed by conflicting statements or complicated systems. We are left drifting and more or less powerless to extricate ourselves from our unsatisfactory situation. Paul desires that these Christians shall escape such an experience. He wishes them not only to be able to judge promptly and clearly regarding the truth, but also that they shall be confident of their judgment, assured in their own minds that they are right. Here again we see how closely related are the spiritual and the intellectual sides of Christian experience. Their hearts are to be knitted together in love "unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding."

"That they may know the mystery of God, even Christ." There are many variations in the ancient manuscripts as to the reading of these words. Some omit the word "Christ" and read "the mystery of God." But there is good authority for leaving the word Christ in the text. The three possible renderings are: "The mystery of the God of Christ;" "the mystery of God, which is Christ;" "the mystery of God, Christ." In the last Christ is in apposition with God, and it is declared that Christ is God. The preferable rendering is the second, in which Christ is the mystery. What Paul

that they may know the mystery of God, [1]*even* Christ, 3 in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. 4 This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech. 5 For though I am absent in the flesh yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

[1]The ancient authorities vary much in the text of this passage.

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desires is that they may fully know the mystery of God, which mystery is Christ himself. In i: 27 he has already declared that the mystery is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Here Christ is referred to as the mystery simply. In the next verse he assigns a strong reason for the desire that they should have thorough knowledge of Christ.

"In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."

In Christ as in a treasury is stored up all the wealth of wisdom and knowledge. This wisdom and knowledge are "hidden" in him. But just as he as the "mystery" of God has now been revealed, so also all the wealth of knowledge hidden in him may be discovered. We cannot know him fully and all at once. Our knowledge of him must grow from more to more. Wisdom means the ability to reason about and understand things. Knowledge is the contents of the mind. The word here translated knowledge appears in the later Gnostic philosophy as indicating the higher knowledge possessed by superior minds. The philosophy took its name from the "gnosis" or higher "knowledge" which it professed to teach. No doubt there were beginnings of this form of teaching in or around Colossae when Paul wrote.

"This I say:" what I have just said, implying also all that he had previously written in chapter i. "That no one may delude you." Paul here uses a word which means to reckon falsely. It is compounded of a word meaning "reckon," as used frequently by Paul and a preposition, and is literally "to reckon on one side, or away from a straight line." "Persuasiveness of speech" means enticing or plausible speech, speech that is calculated to deceive by its attractiveness and plausibility. It is easy to construct a logical scheme of ideas and make every part fit into the system so perfectly, and to make the system as a whole so symmetrical and beautiful that the unwary are led to believe it must be true. And yet such an outwardly

6 As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in him,
7 rooted and builded up in him, and established [1]in your faith, even
as ye were taught, abounding [2]in thanksgiving.

[1]Or, by. [2]Some ancient authorities insert ,in it.

perfect system may be built on quicksand. Such was the later Gnosticism, now beginning to appear in Colossae.

In the next verse, as usual, Paul commends what he sees to commend in his readers. He has been warning them against false teaching, but he is assured that they remain steadfast in the faith. He is absent in the flesh but present with them in the spirit "joying and beholding your order and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ." The words "order" and "stedfastness" may be taken as a military figure. "Order" would then suggest the well organized or orderly ranks and "stedfastness" would suggest compactness and power. Others see in the word "order" a figure of a well-ordered state rather than of a compact army. There is little choice between the two. The military figure would naturally grow out of Paul's close contact with his guard as a Roman prisoner and the military atmosphere of the city of Rome. In either case he commends the Colossians for the regularity of their Christian life and devotion, and for the strength of their faith in Christ.

EXHORTATION TO CONTINUE IN CHRIST AS THEY BEGAN. (II: 6, 7.)

"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord." You have already received him. This is the true beginning and foundation. Ye received him as "the Christ." The doctrine of Colossians is a doctrine of the Christ, the Messiah. They received him as such. In this reception they recognized two facts about the Christ. One was that he was the historic person known as "Jesus." The other was that he was "Lord." What they had previously received was not a message merely about Christ. They had received Christ himself. "So walk in him." The continuance of the Christian life is a prolongation, as it were, of the initial act. We continue in our first attitude of faith, and organize our life with all its details around this central fact. "Rooted and builded up in him" combines two metaphors, that of a tree or living plant, and that of building. The idea is perfectly clear. The tenses are not the same. "Rooted"

8 [1]Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men

[1]Or, see whether.

is the perfect tense: "Having been rooted." This was the beginning. It is a fixed state. But upon this beginning is to ensue a continuous development. The development is expressed by the figure of "building" a house; "being builded up in him." Christ is the element in which the whole process takes place. He is not here the corner stone of the building or the foundation, but rather the cement in which all the stones are laid. He is the vital bond of unity which holds the building together. "And established in your faith." Faith appears again as the comprehensive principle of the Christian life. To be established in the faith is to remain steadfast in all Christian duties and relations. "Abounding in thanksgiving." Thanksgiving to God is the normal and proper spirit for the performance of all Christian duty. It is a means of increasing our stability and steadfastness since it opens the heart for the full communication of God's grace and love to us.

Warnings against Error and Exhortations to the True Life. (II: 8-iv :6.)

Warning against False Philosophy (II: 8).

In *verse 8* Paul leads his readers up to the point which has been implied in all the preceding words. He has had in mind a false teacher or false teachers and now he proceeds to give specific warning against them. "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you." The figure is military. The conqueror bears away as the spoils of war either treasures of a material kind or captives. Paul holds up to the Colossians the picture of the conquered, bound and led away by the captors, and exhorts them strongly against such a fate. "Through his philosophy and vain deceit." This has sometimes been taken as an inspired condemnation of all philosophy. But Paul does not mean this. "Philosophy" is followed by two words which describe it, translated "vain deceit." The words literally mean "empty deceit." The thing he is condemning therefore is not philosophy or the pursuit of knowledge or wisdom in its truer and

after the [1]rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: 9 for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, 10 and in him ye are

[1] Or, elements. See Gal. 4. 3 marg.

higher meaning, although of course to him the gospel is the one true account of God which has power to illumine man as to the highest things. At the same time he does not prohibit the free exercise of our powers of intellect in the pursuit of truth in any of its fruitful and legitimate forms. "Philosophy and vain deceit" is his description of a so-called philosophy which is high sounding and pretentious but empty, and destitute of real value.

"After the tradition of men." Traditions were teachings handed down from one generation to another. It is sometimes used in a good sense, as that which God has taught men transmitted through human agency. But Jesus in the strongest manner condemned traditions as held and taught by the Jews. The Jewish Talmud is simply a storehouse of human traditions. In the usual meaning of the term, a tradition was simply a teaching derived from human authority, made binding on men and unchangeable, and thus repressive and deadening and interfering with growth rather than promoting it. The "tradition" here probably refer to the Jewish elements in the false teachings. All religious bodies are in danger of the blighting influence of tradition which may take the form of rigid ecclesiastical systems or dead and formal orthodoxies, devoid of life and power, more concerned to preserve the form than to promote the life, more deeply interested in suppressing individuality and life in the Spirit than in diffusing the knowledge of the truth among men. (Compare Gal. i: 14; 2 Thess. ii: 15; iii: 6; 1 Cor. xi: 2; Gal. iv: 3.)

"After the rudiments of the world." The word "rudiments" meant originally the letters of the alphabet. The phrase would in a general way signify the A B C's of the world. Paul here refers to elementary principles of teaching and life which dwarf men and keep them in their spiritual childhood. Further on he gives further descriptions of these traditions and rudiments. The rudiments or elements seem to have been the Gentile rules and teachings. In the next clause by way of contrast with the traditions and rudiments Paul adds "and not after Christ." "After Christ" expresses the new standard of judgment for the teachings of men. It seemed no

made full, who is the head of all principality and power: 11 in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ:

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doubt a stupendous claim to make for Jesus Christ that he should constitute the sole criterion of truth, and the supreme guide to belief and life. In the next verse, therefore, the apostle justifies what he has just said by asserting that Christ was supremely endowed for his place and word.

All Needs Supplied Through Christ. (II: 9-15.)

Verse 9 repeats in a more definite and emphatic form what was stated in i: 19. There we read that it pleased the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell. Here the expression is condensed and pointed and very strong: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." All that is meant by Godhead or deity is not only manifested through Christ, but also embodied in him. "Dwelleth" means abide permanently. "Bodily" refers of course to the incarnate Christ meaning "in the body," or abides in him in his bodily state. This was true of him during his earthly life and is now true of him in his glorified humanity. Paul here says in effect to the false teachers: "If you insist that Deity can be known to man through a long series of mediators or emanations from God, behold the total Godhead in Christ. If you imagine that matter is by its very nature an evil thing and remote from God, behold the entire Godhead dwelling in a human being who has appeared among men in a bodily form." The expression "Godhead" here is not the same as that in Rom. i: 20. The word in Romans means divinity, or the quality of the divine. Here the word, which is not the same, means deity or partaking of the nature of the divine.

"And in him ye are made full." There is no lack to those who are in Christ. Every possible relation to God is completed, and every spiritual need is met for those united to him in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead." "Who is the head of all principality and power." Observe that in Colossians the headship of Christ is the special point of emphasis, while in Ephesians it is the unity of all things in him. In chapter i: 16 we find the same words in the same order. Christ is head, or ruler, over all forms of principality and

12 having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him

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power, just as he is head of the church and the Lord of creation. Hence there can be no question of other intermediaries between God and man who shall usurp his place.

Spiritual Circumcision and Resurrection Through Christ. (II: 11-12.)

"In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands." This means a spiritual as distinguished from a fleshly circumcision. "In the putting off of the body of the flesh." This marks the completeness of the spiritual change. The whole body, that is, the entire nature was affected by this spiritual circumcision. In the Old Testament even the idea of a spiritual circumcision is found. "In the circumcision of Christ" is a more specific description of the spiritual circumcision. It is the circumcision which Christ performs or which is the result of union with him. There was a constant tendency to return to the Jewish idea of the necessity for circumcision among the early churches, under the influence of Jewish teachers. Paul, as usual, defines Christianity as a purely spiritual religion over against these teachers. It is to be remarked further that Paul here uses the phrase "the body of the flesh" not to indicate that the body is sinful in itself. It is the body as the source of sinful impulses and the sphere in which sin operates. The next verse introduces the Christian ceremony of baptism with its spiritual significance.

"Having been buried with him in baptism." This verse brings out clearly the form of baptism. It is an immersion in water which symbolizes death with Christ, and emergence from water which symbolizes resurrection with him. The passage in Rom. vi: 4f is a more complete and detailed statement of the same idea. We are raised with him "through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." Two things are clear from this: first that it is the spiritual fact of "faith in the working of God" that gives value to the outward act; and second that our baptism symbolizes a spiritual fact for us which finds its real explanation in Christ's resurrection from the dead. The meaning of baptism, then, is bound up with its form. It shadows

from the dead. 13 And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, *I say*, did he make alive

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forth to the eye the great spiritual reality behind the outward act. We believe that God raised Christ from the dead. The same power of God which raised him thereby flows into and transforms us. We are spiritually raised from the dead by God's power, and have in Christ's resurrection and our own spiritual regeneration the guarantee of the resurrection of our own bodies.

They Were Made Alive and Forgiven through Christ. (ii: 13.)

Paul now briefly sums up the spiritual history of his Gentile readers in statements very similar to those found in the parallel passages in Ephesians (see Eph. ii: 1ff.) "And you, being dead through your trespasses." Death and resurrection are the two terms describing what has taken place, and these words run through the entire epistle either by implication or explicitly. So also they run through Ephesians. "Death through your trespasses" is a phrase defining what Paul means by death here. Through their trespasses they were apart from the life of God and under condemnation. They were without power to make themselves alive. Only God's power can raise the dead. "And the uncircumcision of your flesh." The Gentile was outside the pale of the covenant of God with Israel and therefore without the promises. Circumcision was the distinctive sign and symbol of God's covenant with Israel. It is employed here quite naturally by way of contrast to show what was the spiritual state of the Gentiles. Of course "uncircumcision of your flesh" is here to be understood as corresponding with the "circumcision made with hands." But it was significant of their spiritual condition.

"You, *I say*, did he "make alive" together with him." To quicken is to make alive, and here it clearly means make alive in the sense of raising from the dead. They had been made alive "together with him," i.e., together with Christ. "Having forgiven us all our trespasses." Here Paul changes the "you" to "us," because at this point Gentile and Jew shared alike in the grace of God. The Gentiles were in uncircumcision, but as a circumcised Jew, Paul also needed the spiritual renewal. Forgiveness was the common blessing bestowed

together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; 14 having blotted out [1]the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nail-

[1]Or, the bond that was against us by its ordinances.

upon all alike. The making alive was attended by the forgiveness. The latter was necessary as a part of the spiritual change which had taken place in them.

The Bond Blotted Out Through the Cross. (II: 14.)

"Having blotted out." The word here translated "blotted" means "to wipe out," or "wipe away," "erase," or "blot out," or "obliterate." The word emphasizes the completeness of the process. "The bond written in ordinances." A bond was a note or obligation signed by a debtor obligating himself to pay. The bond referred to here was the law of Moses. God himself of course prescribed this law but it was nevertheless binding since it was the embodiment of principles growing out of the nature of God and man. The covenant between God and Israel was assumed in all Jewish writings of the period, and indeed is the fundamental idea in all the Old Testament teachings. But there was never much emphasis upon the assent of Israel to the Covenant. It was customary rather to think of it as a sign of God's electing grace. He gave the law to Israel and it was right because it came from him. "Written in ordinances." This means written in "decrees." The Greek word is that from which our word "dogma" comes. The word dogma carries with it the idea of a definite and formal decree, an outward rule of faith or conduct. It expresses the outwardness and formality of a law better than the term "law" itself, which is sometimes used in the New Testament for a principle rather than a formal law, as where Paul speaks of a "law of faith," or "the law of the Spirit of life." "That was against us, which was contrary to us." The stress is given to the fact that these dogmas or ordinances were against us in order to give a like emphasis to the corresponding fact that Christ has removed them, as appears in the following clauses.

"And he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." The dogmas or ordinances were an obstacle which Christ removed for us on the cross. "Nailing it to the cross" has been supposed to

ing it to the cross; 15 [1]having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

[1]Or, having put off from himself the principalities, etc.

refer to some custom of driving a nail through a bond and thus canceling it. Commentators quite generally hold, however, that there is no conclusive evidence of such custom. The idea of nailing the bond to the cross was a perfectly natural one without such basis in custom, since Christ was nailed to the cross, and it was by his death that the bond against us was destroyed.

By the Cross Christ Triumphed over Our Foes. (II: 15.)

The first part of *verse 15* has been the subject of much difference of opinion among expositors of this epistle. "Having despoiled the principalities and powers" is the expression which is most obscure. The word rendered "despoiled" may mean to "unclothe oneself." The word is understood by some as intended to describe Christ as "unclothing" himself or putting off his body in the act of death. Compare Paul's words in iii: 9 where the same word is used; see also 2 Cor. v: 4. That is to say in his death he divested himself of his body and through his victory over death made an exhibition of principalities and powers Others take the word as referring not to his body but to the hostile powers of evil. He put off these hostile powers as a garment, conquered them in the act of death. This is evidently the understanding of the Canterbury revisers as is indicated by their rendering: "having put off from himself the principalties and the powers." There is no material difference between this and the rendering of our American revisers "despoiled." "Principalities and powers" we have already encountered in *verse 10* of the present chapter. The expression no doubt describes all kinds of hostile powers angelic or otherwise. Some have thought that Paul here refers to angelic mediators through whom the law was given. He has just spoken of the blotting out of the bond or ordinances against us in the law. This statement is supposed to complete the other declaration as to the law. Not only did Christ abolish the law but he set aside the mediation of angels in revealing God's will to men. In nailing the bond to the cross we won a supreme triumph.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: 17 which are

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But this reference to angelic mediators of the law is certainly not clearly indicated in the passage before us. If we keep in mind that the false teachers insisted upon angels and other mediators the words here may be properly understood as Paul's comprehensive description of all our spiritual enemies who come under the general description of principalities and powers.

"Made a show of them openly.' This was in accordance with custom in ancient times. Captives were exhibited in public. "Triumphing over them in it." In the cross Christ triumphed over all our spiritual enemies. Dr. Alexander Maclaren sets forth the meaning of these words as follows: "If we read, spoiled for himself principalities and powers, we see the whole process before our eyes—the victor stripping his foes of arms and ornaments and dress, then parading them as his captives, (made a show of them openly) and then dragging them at the wheels of his triumphant car" (triumphing over them).

Warning against the False Judgments of Men (II: 16-19).

In *verse 16* Paul proceeds to give practical application to what he has just been saying about the spiritual change which had come to the readers through Christ. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day." It is most probable that all these items belong to the Jewish element in the false teaching at Colossae. We have seen in the preceding verses a reference to the "tradition of men," to circumcision, and to the "bond written in ordinances," etc., all of which have been set aside in their old Jewish meaning, through Christ. Here he exhorts the Colossians to maintain their independence and freedom in Christ. "Meat and drink" at once suggests Jewish rules and regulations. There were numerous provisions in the Jewish law on the subject of foods. In the matter of drinks there is not so much said. Nazarites were forbidden to drink wine as were priests serving in the tabernacle. (Lev. x: 9; Num. vi: 3). The sect of the Essenes in the time of Christ were extreme in their asceticism refusing to eat animal food and to drink wine. The feast day was an annual ob-

a shadow of the things to come: but the body is Christ's. 18 Let no man rob you of your prize [1]by a voluntary humility and [2]worship-

[1]Or, of his own mere will, by humility, etc. [2]The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature, or to the Creator.

servance, the new moon was a monthly, and the sabbath a weekly observance (see Ezek. xlv: 17; Hosea ii: 11; 1 Chron. xxiii: 31; Lev. xxiii: 4; Num. xxviii: 11-15; Matt. xxvi: 5).

"Which are a shadow of the things to come." The figure of the shadow and the substance is applied on a large scale in the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. x: 1). The shadow here means what we ordinarily mean by the word. A body casts a shadow. It is the unsubstantial thing which is produced by the body itself. In the next clause therefore Paul adds: "but the body is Christ's." Outward observances were suggestive of great realities. The error of the Jews who wished to adhere to them as an essential part of Christianity was in their failure to grasp the relation between the shadow and the substance. Paul does not utilize the occasion here to offer any teaching about the sabbath beyond the condemnation of the Jewish effort to impose it as a legal requirement upon Christians. The celebration of the first day of the week gradually displaced the observance of the seventh day by Christians generally. As in the case of other things of the Old Testament the essential and spiritual element in the observance of one day in seven was retained by Christianity. But the legal and temporary phases were left out.

He proceeds next to warn them against another form of error. "Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility." The word rendered rob-you-of-your-prize may mean to "rob of a prize" or simply to "decide against" without any direct reference to a prize. But the word was used of the decision by an umpire and may possibly bear this meaning here. The expression "by a voluntary humility" is a very difficult one to understand or translate with perfect assurance as to correctness of meaning. The word translated "humility" means "a deep sense of one's littleness" or simply humility. This of course when exercised toward God or Christ is quite proper and is indeed enjoined by the apostle in another place in this epistle (iii: 12). "Voluntary" means "willing" or "inclined to a thing." The general meaning of the apostle becomes clear in the

ping of the angels, [1]dwelling in the things which he hath [2]seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast the Head, from

[1]Or, taking his stand upon. [2]Many authorities, some ancient, insert, not.

phrase which follows: "and worshipping of the angels." "Worship" here means especially outward and ceremonial worship or prostrations. Evidently the doctrine urged upon the Colossians by the false teachers required such worship of angels and expressed itself in a wholly perverted form of humility. Angels are not mediators or saviors and self abasement before them is the outcome of a false philosophy, not obedience to the gospel. In effect, then, Paul says: "Let no one devoted to the worship of angels lead you into the practice of a false humility in the same direction."

"Dwelling in the things which he hath seen." The King James version inserts the word "not" before seen, making it read "things which he hath not seen." The best reading omits "not" and translates as in our text. The difference in the meaning is very slight between the two readings. The apostle is describing the false teachers as those who "take their stand upon" or "investigate" or "pry into," or "dwell" in the things which they had seen. This means that they professed to have had visions of spiritual realities above the knowledge of ordinary men. If the word "not" is inserted it would simply be the apostle's denial of their professions in his statement of their claim. Some have understood the statement as meaning that the false teachers confined their view to the visible world, the things seen with the natural eyes. This, however, is scarcely in keeping with the kind of error which is implied everywhere in the epistle. These teachers laid claim to a superior knowledge of the spiritual world, not the visible. A further description of the false teacher is that he was "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." Here again the "fleshly mind" means the mind which derives its quality from the flesh. The false doctrine claimed great knowledge of mysteries of the spiritual universe but it was a fleshly knowledge. It made great pretense of humility and self abasement, of unworthiness to approach God, but all this was not true humility of spirit at all. It was rather a spirit "vainly puffed up."

Verse 19 is the climax in his description of the false teachers begun in *verse 18*. He has gone over a number of points about them,

whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.

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showing wherein they were in error. In the *19th verse* the most radical defect of all is named. "Not holding fast the Head." Christ is the head, and, apart from him, the members cannot increase with the increase of God. All other errors are wrapped up in their separation from him who is the truth. "From whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands." This is a continued description of the relations of the Head to the body. The body is an organism. Its parts are "knit together" and it receives nourishment only as the law of the organism, union with the head, is obeyed. This union of the parts is brought about by means of the "joints and bands." The latter phrase means literally "points of contact" and "ligaments." The word here translated "bands" was employed as a medical term by Greek physicians and meant ligaments binding the joints together. Here it is probably not used in the strictly medical sense but more generally as including ligaments, muscles, or tendons, in short all those parts of the body which bound it together in unity. "Increaseth with the increase of God." The result of this union of head and members is growth according to God's law of growth. They were not to be puffed up or expand into artificial bigness by elaborate ritual observances and ceremonies. They were rather to grow in spiritual life and power through God's grace in union with their Head, Jesus Christ.

Exhortation Against Fleshly Precepts Since They Died to Them (II: 20-23).

In *verse 20* Paul returns to the underlying principle of their Christian life which determines their attitude towards outward forms in Jewish and heathen practice. "If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world." is not the expression of a doubt as to their having passed through the change but means rather "seeing that ye died with Christ, etc." To die "from the rudiments of the world" is to pass from the control of the rudiments, or elementary principles, previously defined as the shadow rather than the body casting the shadow. They had come under the control of a new spiritual principle, best described as life from the dead. Death and resurrection

20 If ye died with Christ from the [1]rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances, 21 Handle not, nor taste, nor touch 22 (all which things are to perish

[1]Or, elements. See Gal. 4. 3 marg.

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are the two terms which best describe the change. In the third chapter, *verse 1*, he takes up the other side of the thought of death from the rudiments and enforces Christian duty positively by describing the law of the Christian's life as a resurrection. He has already in ii: 11-13 presented the idea as constituting the true symbolic meaning of baptism and also as a spiritual process due to their faith in the operation of God.

"Why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances?" Literally translated this is "why do you permit yourselves to be dogmatized, or why do you dogmatize yourselves?" which is of course to say "why do you permit yourselves to be brought under the control of dogmas?" The meaning of "dogmas" in this connection does not refer to doctrinal statements, but rather external requirements to be accepted on authority and as opposed to the free development of the inner spiritual life in Christ. Paul means by the phrase "as though living in the world," living in accordance with a worldly principle. "Outward forms and ceremonies and rules of conduct are essentially of the world, and you have abandoned these for a higher principle."

The next clause indicates what these dogmas or rudiments were. "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch." These words are sometimes quoted as if they were intended as a good rule having the approval of the apostle, whereas he quotes the rule in order to condemn it. The words here appear not as in the King James version but in the reverse order. The commands appear in an ascending scale reaching its climax in the last "touch not." Coverdale forcibly renders the words, although in the other order: "as when they say, touch not this, taste not that, handle not that." The words which follow seem to indicate that the things referred to were articles of food and drink. The apostle adds: "all which things are to perish with the using." These words are placed in parenthesis, and quite properly, since the continuation of the sentence is found in the remaining words of the question. "After the precepts and doctrines of men" (Compare

with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility,

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Is. xxix: 13; Matt. xv: 7-8; Mark vii: 6, 7; as to meats see also 1 Cor. viii: 8). The above precepts are mere human regulations, not divine requirements, and hence have no essential place in the life of a Christian. The words of the apostle here make two things very clear: first, that he attached little importance to merely negative precepts of any kind. The religion of Christ is a positive energetic force and not merely ascetic self-denial. The second is that in relation to all merely outward and humanly prescribed rules of conduct the Christian should maintain an attitude of independence.

Verse 23 proceeds to show how empty and valueless are all these human regulations for the religious life. "Which things indeed have a show of wisdom." In *verse 8* reference was made to "philosophy and vain deceit," and to the danger therefrom. Here the "show" or "repute" of wisdom is the outward result of the false philosophy. It is not real philosophy, and it is not real wisdom, but rather a philosophy which is "vain deceit," and a wisdom which is merely outward. "Will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body." "Will-worship" means worship which is self-imposed, not a worship due to an understanding of the truth or a real approach to God. Our own will in other words is the controlling influence and guide and authority in such worship. "Humility" is the same word found in *verse 18*. There it means a false and exaggerated humility. This is also the meaning here, referring probably to self-abasement before the angels. "Severity to the body" introduces again the ascetic element in the doctrine of the false teachers. In each one of Paul's references to the false teachers in this epistle he includes the two elements, a false philosophy leading to a worshipping of angels or other false mediators between God and man, on the one hand; and a Jewish ascetic tendency leading to a false ceremonialism, on the other.

The closing words of *verse 23* are very difficult. The Canterbury and American revisions render the words: "but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." The King James version reads: "not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh." Two words are especially the occasion of difference of opinion. One is the word translated "against," a Greek preposition (*pros*), which has this

and severity to the body; *but are* not of any [1]value against the indulgence of the flesh.

3 If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. 2 Set

[1]Or, honor.

meaning only in cases where the context makes it clear that it is required. Usually it means "toward" or "tending to," "with reference to" or "pertaining to." The other is the word translated "indulgence," or as in the King James version "satisfying" (Greek *pleesmoneen*). "Indulgence" is the better rendering of this word, since its prevailing meaning is "repletion" or "excessive indulgence." It seems difficult to translate the preposition as in theRevisedVersions "against." But there is a possible rendering adopted by some which allows its usual meaning to the preposition as well as to the word translated indulgence. It supposes a sudden break in Paul's thought after the word "value." He would thus say: "but are not of any value (or as some render, any honor)—*but are* for the indulgence of the flesh." That is to say, severity to the body practiced by these men, is of no real value. They tend on the contrary to the indulgence of the flesh. As a translation of the words this is the preferable interpretation. After all, however, it comes to practically the same meaning as the other, although with some difference. Instead of asserting that these ascetic practices are without value against fleshly indulgence, Paul goes further and says they really tend positively to the indulgence of the flesh.

Exhortation to the Risen Life since They Were Raised with Christ From the Dead (iii: 1-4).

Paul now comes to the positive side of his teaching. He has been exposing error in the greater part of the last chapter. But he passes over in the third chapter to the great spiritual forces of the Christian life. "If then ye were raised together with Christ." This spiritual resurrection is no mere ideal to be attained later. It is a present fact. They died spiritually with Christ and were raised with him from the dead when they believed. The change took place in union with Christ. It is the same thought we have so frequently encountered in the preceding parts of the epistle and in Ephesians.

your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. 3 For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

The Christian life on earth is a spiritual death and resurrection. "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is," etc. Your pursuits as Christians should be in accordance with the nature of your life and its ultimate aim. The spiritual resurrection was in and hrough Christ and the inevitable tendency of such a life is an upward tendency, its aim follows him who is its author. "The things above" are the eternal things of the spiritual life, all of which for the Christian have their centre in Jesus Christ. "Seated on the right hand of God" means at the place of power. Christ is now seated where all power is given unto him. In seeking things above, therefore, Christians ally themselves with omnipotence as embodied in Christ who reigns over his kingdom.

"Set your mind on the things that are above." This brings out the inward side of the seeking in the previous verse. They are to seek the things above in all their outward activities. But as corresponding with this it is necessary that they keep their thoughts upon these eternal things also. The inward life should correspond with the outward. "Not on the things that are upon the earth." This is not an indirect reference to errors and practices already condemned so much as a general contrast with the heavenly things he is enjoining them to cultivate. The sphere of their life had been changed and he is exhorting them to remember this in the pursuit of the Christian ideal.

Next Paul repeats by way of emphasis the reason for the exhortation. "For ye died." The spiritual death to sin when faith was exercised in Christ is what is meant. "And your life is hid with Christ in God." The conception of Paul was that the spiritual life was a distinct order to which the Christian belongs. This spiritual universe is the greatest of realities to the Christian. He now sits therein with Christ. It is a sphere which has its ultimate ground in God himself. But the believer's life is identified with the life of Christ and as Christ is now hid in God so also the Christian's life is hid in God. This implies that it is under the operation of spiritual laws, and is apart from the life of ordinary men, and also that it is a secure life, secure as Christ's own life is secure. It also implies that

4 When Christ, *who is* [1]our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.

5 Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which

[1]Many ancient authorities read, your.

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the real life of Christians is but imperfectly manifested at present. The next verse carries out the thought of an imperfectly manifested present life. "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested." He is now hidden from the gaze of men. But one day he will come again and appear to them in glory. This no doubt refers to the second coming of Christ. There are a great many difficulties connected with the subject of Christ's second coming as it is taught in the New Testament. But there is great uniformity among all New Testament writers, as well as clearness in the form of the teaching, as to the great outstanding fact of a future personal coming of Christ, a manifestation of him as triumphant Lord in his kingdom. He is "our life" in the sense that he is the cause of our life and its source. Therefore when he is manifested, "then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." The complete identification of Christ with his people, and of his people with Christ, shall be evident to all. They shall share in his glory. He shall gather them up out of their humiliation and weakness and infirmity and transform them. Their hidden life, long suppressed in its latent powers, shall then appear in its essential nature. The bud shall blossom into the flower. It shall be a manifestation "in glory" in the sense that its own inner glory shall become manifest to all, and it shall appear as identical with the glory of Christ himself.

EXHORTATIONS TO ABSTAIN FROM SINS OF UNCLEANNESS. III: 5-7.)

"Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth." The word translated "put to death" is none too strong in the translation. It is more than "mortify" as generally understood, and means "slay" or "kill." It simply carries out the thought of the preceding sections. There has been a death and resurrection. "Live now in accordance with this spiritual change which has taken place in you," is what the apostle means. In Matt. v: 29, 30 Jesus speaks of plucking out the eye if it causes us to stumble. Paul is of course not

is idolatry; 6 for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God [1]upon the sons of disobedience: 7 [2]wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things; 8 but now do ye also put them all away: anger,

[1]Some ancient authorities omit, upon the sons of disobedience. See Eph. 5. 6.
[2]Or, amongst whom.

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referring to the physical members of our bodies except in so far as these were the source and sphere of the operation of sin. The words which follow make clear what he means. "Fornication" is the general word to describe all forms of sexual sin, whether of the married or the unmarried. "Uncleanness" carries the act back into the thought. It means uncleanness of thought as well as of act. "Passion" is from a word which was used for passionate desire in either a good or bad sense. But in the New Testament it was used as a rule in a bad sense, meaning depraved or ungovernable desire. "Evil desire" is more general than the word passion, and includes every kind of evil desire. "And covetousness, which is idolatry." The word here translated "covetousness" appears also in Eph. v: 3. The word means literally a greedy desire to have more, and of course this passes very easily into the sin of covetousness or a greedy desire to accumulate money. Dr. MacLaren remarks with much force that in the case of many men the sins of uncleanness in youth are followed in middle life by the sins of covetousness. In fact the two kinds of sin are essentially alike. Both of them are rooted in the desire for the unlawful and unrestrained gratification of the lower nature.

"For which things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." The words "upon the sons of disobedience" are omitted in some manuscripts but the weight of authority favors their retention. Paul believed in the wrath of God. In fact God's wrath is simply the expression of his holiness, and the other side of his love. It is because he loves that he cannot look with complacency upon these sins which so mar and deface his own image in man.

The next verse reminds his readers of their former manner of life before their death to sin and resurrection to a new life. "Wherein ye also once walked" that is before you were Christians. "When ye lived in these things." The difference between "walk" and "live" here seems to be the difference between the outward and the inward. Pauls says then in effect: "the time was when your manner of life, your outward conduct, corresponded to the walk of

wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: 9 lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, 10 and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto

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those who practice these sins. That time was when your life principle was un-Christian. You were governed by an inward principle of sin which led you into this manner of life."

EXHORTATION TO PUT AWAY SINS OF DISPOSITION. (III: 8-11.)

"But now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth." These words need little comment. "Anger" and "malice" are closely related words. "Anger" is from a root meaning to teem as fruits and plants with juice. "Wrath" is from a root meaning to "rush along" or "be in a heat." The former means an anger which arises gradually, the latter one which boils over suddenly and then subsides. "Malice" is more deep-seated and represents a fixed attitude. 'Shameful speaking out of your mouth" probably means "abusive language," a sort of exaggeration of the " railing" which precedes. "Shameful speaking" does not here seem to mean obscene or filthy speech. This group of sins is mentioned in *verses 5 to 7*. The sins in the present group are those of disposition and are closely related to each other in their source and manifestation.

"Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings." Anger, wrath, railing, etc., would easily lead to falsehood. Paul commands them to abstain from false dealing with one another because they have "put off," as a garment, the old man, the corrupt and decaying natural man It was old as contrasted with the recently received or "new" man, and old also because subject to decay and death. It was the sinful and perishable nature.

"And have put on the new man." This continues the figure of "putting off" and "putting on" as of a garment. When you became Christians you put on a nature different from that which you previously had. The "new man" here is not Christ, as some have understood the expression, although it does refer to the new nature which the Christian obtains in Christ. Christ is the source of the newness of the transformed manhood. "Who is being renewed." This expression suggests the restoration of a lost condition and may refer

knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all.

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to the account of man's fall in Genesis. This, however, is not its necessary meaning. The word rendered "new man" is not the same as the root of the participle translated "being renewed." "The new man" means "recent in origin," young or youthful. "Being renewed" means being transformed in quality (compare Eph. ii: 15; iv: 24; 2 Cor. iii: 6; v: 7; Gal. iii: 27). "Unto knowledge." The word here translated knowledge means full or complete knowledge. We have already met the word in i: 9; ii: 2.

"After the image of him that created him." The process of renewal is gradual, although in a single act they had put off the old and had put on the new man. The daily renewal was the necessary result of the first renewal in order to the complete working out of all that was potential in the new nature when it was first given. The renewal, however, is governed at all stages by the principle of conformity to an ideal. It is "after" or according to the "image of him that created him." God's image in other words is being reproduced in man. God's purposes are never broken off. In time they are all fulfilled although a wide circuit round "be fetched." The original ideal for man in creation, and more, will be realized in Christ. In this passage again we see the very close connection between knowledge and moral character, or likeness to God. The renewal is "unto thorough knowledge" and it is a renewal according to the image of God. The roots of knowledge are imbedded deep in character.

The reference to the "new man" carries the thought of the apostle on to the essential unity which is the result of the renewal in Christ. "Where there cannot be Greek and Jew." There are to be no longer national distinctions setting men over against each other in hostile groups. "Circumcision and uncircumcision." This also was a superficial line of cleavage to be done away in Christ. "Barbarian, Scythian." Barbarians were the outlying uncultivated, uncivilized races, and the Scythians were regarded as the worst of the barbarians. Christ was to renew men so completely that the very word barbarian would give place to the word brother, and even the most degraded races would be permitted to share in the power of the gospel which

12 Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; 13 forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a com-

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could renew them in the image of God. "Bondman, freeman." This was a social distinction which was also destined to pass away. Christianity did not attack slavery directly. It put the leaven into society which was destined to overthrow it. The equality of men in their standing before God, and in their privileges in Christ could not fail to abolish an institution which involved the ownership of one man by another. "But Christ is all and in all." He is the unifying bond. All artificial and false distinctions gradually vanish under his rule.

Put on the Graces of Self-restraint along with Love, Peace, and Thankfulness. (iii: 12-15).

Paul has referred to the putting off of the old man in *verse 9*. He then declares the fact of the putting on of the new man in *verse 10*, and indicated how the renewal took place. Then in *verse 11* he declared that all artificial barriers and distinctions are destroyed by the fact of spiritual transformation in Christ. Now in *verse 12*, with his mind full of the glory of the privileges men thus enjoy by the grace of God he addresses the saints at Colossae in a series of descriptive terms, which reflect his own feelings and at the same time describe their character and standing. He rains down upon them, as it were, a multitude of terms which are meant as a picture or ideal to which they are constrained by God's power graciously working in them "Put on therefore." You have "put off" the old man. You are now to put on the new "as God's elect, holy and beloved." "God's elect" are those chosen by God unto salvation "Holy" means set apart to God's service and devoted to him. "Beloved" means beloved of God. All these words contain by suggestion a strong incentive for doing the things he is about to enjoin. "A heart of compassion." Literally this means "bowels" or "intestines" the seat of the more violent passions as was supposed. Our word "heart" answers well to the meaning. "Kindness" is moral goodness from a root meaning useful, virtuous, good. A heart of compassion would show itself in outward acts of goodness. "Humility" means not

plaint against any; even as [1]the Lord forgave you, so also do ye:
14 and above all these things *put on* love, which is the bond of per-

[1]Many ancient authorities read, Christ.

holding too high an estimate of oneself. "Meekness" is mildness or gentleness of spirit. "Longsuffering" means power of endurance under wrong; not losing heart because of wrong

"Forbearing one another and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any, even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye." The measure and standard of their graciousness and forgiveness toward each other is to be the Lord's own forgiveness of them. The "Lord" here refers to Christ.

"And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." He still has in mind the figure of putting off and putting on clothing. The various graces he has just mentioned are the spiritual garments in which the Christian is to clothe himself. The phrase "above all these things" does not mean superior to all these things in importance. It means rather "over all these things." "The bond of perfectness" again does not mean primarily a principle of perfectness, but a belt or girdle. The sense of *verse 14* is thus not only clear but very beautiful when we remember the figure under which the apostle is speaking. His meaning is: "over all these other garments you are to put on love, which is the girdle of perfection." Love, in other words, is the clasp which holds compassion, kindness, humility, etc., in place. Love becomes the bond of perfectness because it brings the other virtues to completeness. Compassion, kindness and the others may be defective in various ways. Love supplies the missing element, puts on the finishing touches, as it were. Compassion may be an emotion merely. Love makes it an act. It may be simply a tear. Love makes it an outstretched hand. Kindness may be premeditated and planned. Love makes it spontaneous and natural. It may be limited to our friends. Love makes it universal. Forgiveness alone might leave us indifferent to the one forgiven. Love makes us wish and seek his good as far as circumstances permit. Thus rudimentary virtues become full grown under the inspiration of love. Thus they are brought to completion. Love is the comprehensive virtue. It is the root of all the others, as well as their bond. Putting it on over the rest therefore completes or perfects the spiritual clothing of the Christian.

fectness. 15 And let the peace of Christ [1]rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of [2]Christ dwell in you [3]richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing [4]one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. 17 And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

[1]Gr. arbitrate. [2]Some ancient authorities read the Lord; others, God.
[3]Or, richly in all wisdom; teaching, etc. [4]Or, yourselves.

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." The word "rule" is the translation of a verb which means to be the umpire, or to arbitrate. The general idea is clear here; let the peace of Christ be the governing principle in your heart. If this be so then the peace of Christ will manifest itself in your relations to others as well as in your inner life. "To the which also ye were called in one body." The peace of Christ thus becomes the bond of union among Christians. The Christian calling means peace within and peace among Christians, who are one body in Christ. All this is the peace of Christ because it is first of all from Christ, and then it is the command of Christ and the duty of his followers. "And be ye thankful." Thankfulness is the certain result of sense of Christ's peace in the heart and among the brethren. The realization of the fact that he calls us to peace with God and with one another and of all that this implies of forgiving grace on God's part inevitably awakens songs of gratitude, as the words of the next verse show. Compare Eph. ii: 14-22.

Let the Word of Christ Abound and Perform Every Duty in His Name iii: 16-17.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom." Some would punctuate by putting a semicolon after the word "you," thus making "richly" qualify the words which follow rather than those which precede. Richly should, however, qualify the preceding phrase "dwell in you." There should, therefore, be a semicolon after "wisdom." The words would then be: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." The word of Christ is to make its abode in them and fill them. The result is that they will be filled with all wisdom. This wisdom in turn will manifest itself in "teaching and admon-

18 Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged. 22 [1]Servants, obey in all things them that are your [2]masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as

[1]Gr. Bondservants. [2]Gr. lords.

ishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." This is closely parallel with the passage in Eph. v: 18-20. The reader is referred to the exposition of the Ephesian passage. "Sing with grace in your hearts unto God." is a fitting description of the spirit in which they were to sing.

Verse 17 concludes this series of exhortations by summing them all up in a comprehensive way: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." The words "in the name of the Lord Jesus" mean being possessed of his spirit and seeking the ends of his kingdom. It is simply the recognition by us of our vital relation with Christ. We are "in him" and derive our life from him. To act in his name, therefore, is to conform to this vital and ideal relation to him.

Exhortations to Particular Classes (iii: 18—iv: 1).

The passage from iii: 18 to iv: 1 is closely parallel to Ephesians v: 22 to vi: 9. In Ephesians most of the exhortations are carried out much more fully than they are here. In Ephesians especially does Paul elaborate the marriage relation under the analogy of Christ and the church. Here the injunctions to husbands and wives are much briefer. The exposition of the passage in Ephesians will be found to cover all the principal points of this section in Colossians. The reader is referred to the commentary on Ephesians in this volume. A few brief notes will be added to the verses now before us by way of emphasis upon certain points.

"Wives be in subjection to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." The command, it will be noted, is to the wife to be in subjection and not to the husband to subject the wife to himself. Paul approaches this subject, as well as all the others in this connection, from the point of view not of rights but of duties, not from the stand-

men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord: 23 whatsoever ye do, work [1]heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; 24 knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 For he that doeth wrong shall [2]receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

[1]Gr. from the soul. [2]Gr. receive again the wrong.

point of what we may claim from others, but rather from the standpoint of what we should render to others. "As is fitting in the Lord" means in accordance with the relationship as it is affected by the will of the Lord.

"Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them." The duty of the husband which corresponds with subjection on the part of the wife is not, it will be noted, lordship over her, but love to her. Love is as binding on him as subjection is on her. The command "be not bitter against them" is most fitting. In ancient society woman's place was very low, and no doubt husbands were tempted to lose patience easily and become resentful toward their wives under slight provocation. Unlimited power over the weak does not tend with average unregenerate men to produce the virtues of kindliness and self-restraint. The injunction, however, is quite as much in point today as in New Testament times.

"Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." Of course Paul is not here thinking of wrong or sinful commands given by parents to children. Nor do his words imply that children should commit sin in obedience to parents. He has in mind the relationship between parents and children in the Lord.

The corresponding duty of parents comes out in the next verse. "Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged." As in the case of bitterness toward wives, so in their relations with children the temptation of the strong in dealing with the weak was to provoke or exasperate them by hasty and harsh treatment.

Verses 22 to 25 are closely parallel to the passage in Eph. vi: 5-9. Servants are to obey masters "in all things," of course assuming that masters do not require sinful action on the part of servants. He encourages servants with the thought that they serve a Master in heaven, and with the promise of an inheritance: "Knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance." Thus the

4 [1]Masters, render unto your [2]servants that which is just and [3]equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

[1]Gr: lords. [2]Gr. Bondservants. [3]Gr. equality.

slave, became an heir. By his faith in Christ he is translated into God's family and will share with God's other children in the heavenly inheritance. "For he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." This is a variation from Ephesians vi: 8 where the words are: "Knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free." In the passage before us the application is in both directions also, to master and slave alike. If either does wrong he will receive recompense for his wrongdoing, or as the apostle expresses it he "shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done." The reader will understand that the word "servants" in the passage here and in Ephesians does not mean servants in our modern sense but slaves who were owned by masters.

The *first verse* of the fourth chapter belongs to the preceding paragraph and contains the conclusion of the apostle's instructions to slaves and masters. "Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal." Two broad principles are here laid down as the Christian basis for dealing with slaves, and they apply to all similar relations, including servants in our households and employes generally. One is the principle of justice. Perhaps the word "just" in the commands refers to that which is required by law. But it certainly means that which is right or just in itself. "Equal"does not here mean that masters are to treat their slaves as their own equals, although in Christ they were equal (compare Paul's words to Philemon in Philemon verse 16). The word here is almost, although not quite, the same in meaning as the word "just." It means "equitable." The apostle thus by means of the word "equal" renders his injunction more emphatic. "Deal with your slaves" he says to the masters "on principles of justice and equity."

Exhortations to Prayer and a Wise Walk (iv: 2-6).

"Continue stedfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving." Alertness and wakefulness, the full exercise of all our spir-

2 Continue stedfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving; 3 withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

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itual faculties, are called for in genuine prayer. Paul does not mean that they were to be always in the attitude or engaged in the act of prayer in the outward sense. The words rather carry the meaning that prayer is a fundamental and permanent principle in their spiritual life. This implies an abiding spirit of prayer, and the frequent repetition of the act of prayer. Watchfulness is called for in many ways in connection with prayer, as against mere formality, against presumption and blindness to facts around us, against spiritual foes who may assail us even in the act of prayer. These on the negative side of watchfulness. On the positive side watchfulness in prayer will seek to discern the meaning of God's dealings with us, to understand his efforts to guide us and in many other ways will make our prayers intelligent and effective. "Thanksgiving" is of course a necessary accompaniment of prayer. The word "prayer" in this verse is a general word for prayer and includes all elements of prayer whether petition, adoration or thanksgiving.

"Withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word." Paul has included Timothy with himself in the opening salutation of the epistle. By "us" therefore he would certainly include Timothy, and no doubt any and all others at Rome who were in any way identified with him in his work for the spread of the gospel. "A door of the word" means a door of opportunity through which the word of the gospel might enter. Many difficulties beset the way of Paul, and his eager heart was never contented with inactivity. Hence this request for the prayers of the Colossians, which, it will be noted, is not a request for prayer, for himself personally, but that a door may be opened for the word. (Compare 1 Cor. xvi: 9; 2 Cor. ii: 12.) Paul was deeply convinced of the practical value and real power of prayer. He not only prayed constantly for the churches at large, but he wanted their prayers in his own behalf for the spread of the gospel. "To speak the mystery of Christ." His office as an apostle was to make known this mystery of God's purpose to save men of all nations through Christ. (See Eph. iii: 2-9.) "For which I am also in bonds." It was the preaching of a universal gospel,

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, [1]redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.

[1]Gr. buying up the opportunity.

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for Gentiles as well as Jews, which led to Paul's imprisonment. The effect of Paul's ministry was the Roman imprisonment. The Jews who wanted a narrower gospel were aroused to intense antagonism by his universal gospel and it was their hostility which finally sent him to prison.

"That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak." The mystery had been hidden. As the apostle to the Gentiles he was under special obligation to make known the mystery, to "manifest" means thus to declare openly the long-concealed mystery of God's grace and purpose in Christ.

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without." The phrase "them that are without" was employed by the Jews in reference to the Gentiles. It came naturally to a Christian Jew as a suitable description of those outside the church. Practical "wisdom" was necessary to avoid bringing reproach upon the gospel. "Redeeming the time" is the same expression as that found in Eph. v: 16. It means, as there, "buying up the opportunity," and is so translated in the margin.

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." The expression "with grace" is probably connected with the idea of God's grace in the heart, and means the sort of speech that would spring from that inward condition. Such speech would be gracious and pleasing, agreeable to the hearer in the spirit which animated it if not always in its contents. "Seasoned with salt" reminds us of Mark ix: 50: "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another." Salt saves from insipidity or tastelessness and from corruption. Speech "seasoned with salt," then, would be wholesome and helpful speech. It would possess healing quality for those who heard it. This is necessary for Christians because their way of life puts them often on the defensive in a world which is governed by other standards and ideals. The words which follow bring out this point, "that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one." It is most important for Christians to be intelligent in their understanding of

7 All my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: 8 whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts; 9 together with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things that *are done* here.

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their own faith, and to have skill in making clear its meaning to others. Christianity, above all religions, appeals to the intelligence.

Commendation of Tychicus and Onesimus (iv: 7-9).

Paul now comes to the closing section of the epistle, which is made up chiefly of commendations and salutations. These three verses (iv: 7-9) are almost identical with Eph. vi: 21, 22. In Ephesians, however, there is no long list of salutations following as in the epistle before us. This difference confirms again the view that Ephesians was addressed to several churches, while Colossians went to the church at Colossae. The reader is referred to the comments on the corresponding passage in Ephesians for explanations of various words in *verses 7 and 8.*

In *verse 9* Paul mentions Onesimus, the runaway slave, whom he is sending back to Philemon, his master, whose home was at Colossae. "Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother." The gospel had transformed the heart of Onesimus, and thereby a transformation was necessary in the language employed to describe him and to express his relations to his master. He is now not merely the slave, but also the "faithful (reliable, trustworthy) and beloved brother." Slave and master are equal in Christ. Onesimus takes his place on a basis of spiritual equality with all other saints, now that he is a new creature in Christ. "Who is one of you." Onesimus was returning home to his master. (See epistle to Philemon). "They shall make known unto you all things that *are done* here." Paul includes Onesimus with Tychicus as one of the messengers. The slave shares with his companion the responsibility and privilege of bearing the news to the Colossians. "All things that are done here" means all the events or occurrences in connection with the spread of the gospel in the city of Rome. There would be many interesting facts relating to Paul's imprisonment, the conversion of Onesimus, and other matters to be declared.

10 Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him), 11 and Jesus that is called Justus, who are of the circumcision: these only *are my* fellow-workers unto

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SALUTATIONS FROM PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS (IV: 10-15).

"Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner saluteth you." In the *twelfth verse* Epaphras is mentioned as a servant of Jesus Christ" simply. In Philemon, *verses 23 and 24*, Epaphras is called "fellow prisoner" while Aristarchus is simply numbered among Paul's "fellow-workers." It is not known why this variation occurs in epistles written and forwarded at the same time. Some have thought, and with probability, that these brethren voluntarily shared Paul's captivity with him in turn. There are several references to Aristarchus in the New Testament. He is mentioned in connection with the tumult at Ephesus (Acts xix: 22). He is a companion of Paul on one of his journeys (Acts xx: 4). Again he was with Paul when the latter set out upon his voyage to Rome (Acts xxvii: 2).

"And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas." It will be recalled that upon an early occasion when Mark wavered in his purpose, Paul rejected him from his company (Acts xv: 38). The references to Mark which come later in the history all seem to indicate that Mark had profited greatly by the sternness of the apostle. Paul here tells the Colossian brethren to "receive him," possibly implying thereby that they had understood Mark as being under the displeasure of the apostle. Mark is one of Paul's "fellow-workers" in Philemon v: 24. There are references to Mark in 1 Peter v: 13 and again in 2 Tim. iv: 11 where Paul tells Timothy to bring Mark to him. "Touching whom ye received commandments." When or how these commandments concerning Mark were sent we do not know. Paul does not repeat them but assumes that his readers will remember.

Paul has already mentioned two Jews. Now he mentions a third, "Jesus that is called Justus." Jesus was not an uncommon name among the Jews. Justus is a Latin name and means just. The words which follow "who are of the circumcision" refers back to the three names he has just mentioned. But the punctuation after circumcision should be changed. The use of the colon there seems to make the apostle declare in the next clause that these three were the

the kingdom of God, men that have been a comfort unto me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a [1]servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness, that he hath much labor for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for

[1]Gr. bondservant.

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only "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God" which he had; whereas it is clear from the verses which follow that this was not the case. What the apostle really says here is that, of the men of the circumcision, these three were the only ones who shared in his mission and work. Jews generally held aloof from him. But these three were loyal to his apostleship to the Gentiles and fearlessly cast in their lot with him, and he is here recording his deep appreciation of their fidelity, since he adds that they were "men that have been a comfort unto me." The form of the Greek sentence here is somewhat unusual in Paul's letters, but it yields the interpretation we have given without in any way violating Greek usage. He singles out these three brethren as the only ones from among the Jews as his fellow-workers unto the kingdom but he does not exclude others who were not Jews. It must have been a source of great joy to the apostle to have this little group of his own race identified with him in his work. His career as apostle to the Gentiles was a strenuous one, beset always with opposition from his own countrymen. But for his mental and spiritual grasp of the meaning of the gospel it is probable that the Jews would have narrowed it to a form of Judaism, and delayed its progress as a world-wide religion a long time.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you." The reader is referred to the comment on Col. i: 7 for statements regarding Epaphras. He was from Colossae, possibly the founder of the church. "Servant of Jesus Christ" is the highest of titles and means literally "bondservant" or "slave." Then follows a beautiful description of the spiritual wrestling of Epaphras for them. "Always striving" (or agonizing, strenuously wrestling) for you in his prayers, that ye may stand (that is, stand fast, not moved away by outside influences) perfect and fully assured (not lacking in any element required by your Christian calling, and assured in your own mind) in all the will of God." The thought of the danger which menaced them from false teachers runs through

them in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you. 15 Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea, and [1]Nym-

[1]The Greek may represent Nympha.

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these words. Epaphras was deeply moved with a sense of their peril and, with a corresponding depth of desire, petitioned God in his prayers for their steadfastness in the faith.

In the next verse Paul bears witness to what he has just said about Epaphras and of the latter's intense solicitude for them. "For I bear him witness, that he hath much labor for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis." These two cities are thus closely associated with Colossae, in part because they were neighboring cities in the valley of the Lycus and were only ten or twelve miles away. It is quite possible that Epaphras was the evangelist through whose preaching all these churches were founded. At any rate his knowledge of the conditions in all three of the churches created in him the deepest interest in their behalf. He felt that a danger which threatened one threatened all, and that his heart was deeply stirred for all of them, Paul himself here bears emphatic witness.

"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, salute you." The Luke here mentioned was undoubtedly the Luke who wrote the third Gospel. It is interesting to note his presence with Paul in so many places in Paul's life. See especially Acts xvi: 10-17; xx: 5; xxi: 18; xxvii: 1; xxviii: 16, and 2 Tim. iv: 11. Luke was a physician and it has been thought that he may have attended Paul in this capacity. But that he was very dear to Paul's heart appears in the words "Luke, the beloved physician" here. Mark and Luke, writers of two of our Gospels, were thus in the closest possible manner associated with the writer of the epistles to the Galatians and Romans. This fact sheds an interesting side light on the modern effort to prove that Paul corrupted and radically altered the gospel as Jesus preached it. There certainly could have been no sense of such antagonism between Jesus and Paul in the minds of Mark and Luke. "Den as" the name coupled with that of Luke here, is simply mentioned without praise or blame. But at a later period in Paul's second imprisonment there is a sad note in the reference to Demas, in the second epistle to Timothy: "For Demas forsook me, having loved this present world," and in the next verse he adds a reference to both Luke and

phas, and the church that is in [1]their house. 16 And when [2]this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the

[1]Some ancient authorities read, her. [2]Gr. the.

Mark: "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he is useful to me for ministering" (2 Tim. iv: 10-11).

In *verse 15* follows a greeting to the neighboring church at Laodicea: "Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in their house." There are three forms of the reading of the word "their" in this sentence in the manuscripts of the New Testament. The other two are "his" and "her." The word Nymphas may in Greek be either masculine or feminine. Copyists would not take it in the same way and hence would vary the gender of the pronoun. The tendency was also strong to substitute the singular for the plural "their," since the plural did not seem to fit the singular in the name Nymphas. But the best manuscript authority favors the plural "their." It probably is employed because the apostle implies that the house of Nymphas was offered the Laodicean church for purposes of worship not by Nymphas alone but by other members of his household, including perhaps his wife. Church houses did not exist at this early period. The assemblies for worship were usually held in the homes of prominent members until a later time when permanent church edifices were erected.

Verse 16 reads: "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea." As to this epistle from Laodicea several questions may be asked. First, was it written by Paul or by some one else. Second, did it originate in Laodicea or did it go to the Laodicean church from elsewhere. Third, does this Laodicean epistle still exist or has it been lost? Fourth, if it now exists, can we identify it with any other New Testament epistle? These questions need not be separated in the reply, although it seemed well to state them thus in order to make clear the various points involved. There is an epistle, written in Latin, known as the "Epistle to the Laodiceans." But after much investigation by scholars it has been pronounced a forgery. It is simply a "tame compilation of phrases" from Paul's epistles. There was also a tradition of the fourth century that the Epistle to the Hebrews was originally written by Paul

church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

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to the Laodiceans. But overwhelming internal evidence is against this view. It seems most unlikely on the other hand that an epistle by Paul to the Laodicean church would have been completely lost. As will be recalled by the reader, we found convincing evidence that our Epistle to the Ephesians was written not to the church at Ephesus only, but to a group of churches including Ephesus. Laodicea was in this region and the most likely supposition is that the "epistle from Laodicea" here refers to the Ephesian epistle which went by the hand of the same messenger. A copy of this circular letter would be left at Laodicea as well as at Ephesus, and owing to the proximity of Colossae it would be quite convenient for these two churches to exchange epistles. We conclude, therefore, that the "epistle from Laodicea" was by Paul's own hand and that we now possess it in our Epistle to the Ephesians.

"And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." Archippus is mentioned in Philemon, verse 2 and is there described as "our fellow-soldier." He is supposed to have been a member of Philemon's family, possibly a son. The fact that Paul here singles him out for special exhortation does not necessarily imply that Archippus had been remiss in the performance of duty. The fact would be explained if he was a young man at the beginning of his ministry. Paul would thus by a special word encourage and strengthen him. "The ministry" he had received "in the Lord" means that he had received it as "in the Lord" by faith, and that the ministry was to be exercised as "in the Lord" and for his glory.

"The salutation of me, Paul, with mine own hand." Compare 2 Thess. iii: 17; 1 Cor. xvi: 21. It was Paul's custom thus to close his epistles. His autograph salutation was the guarantee, as it were, of the genuineness of the epistle. "Remember my bonds." A very brief, but very touching request. "I am a prisoner on your behalf" he would say to them "with a chain on my hand even as I write. My solicitude and prayers for you can express themselves only in ways possible to a prisoner." "Grace be with you." There

18 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.

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is variety in the closing salutations in Paul's epistles. The word "grace" is employed in many connections and associated with various other particular forms of blessing. Here he uses simply the word "grace," and it implies all the rich fullness of meaning found in the more extended conclusions of the other epistles. "Grace be with you" was a benediction laden with every possible blessing wrapped up in the mystery of the gospel which it was his glory to preach.

Date Due

MAY 1 1972
MAY 15 1972
APR 23 1980
MAY 26 1982
MAR 17 1983
MAR 15 1990

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

227.507
M959

Mullins, Edgar Young
AUTHOR

Studies in Ephesians and Colossian
TITLE

227.507
M959 Mullins, Edgar Young
Studies in Ephesians and
Colossians.

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